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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the attached periodic report covering the period from 1 January to 31 May 1998, which was submitted to him, in accordance with paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of Assembly resolution 52/64 A of 10 December 1997, by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

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Letter of transmittal

5 November 1998

Sir,

The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories has the honour to transmit to you herewith, in accordance with paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 52/64 A of 10 December 1997, a periodic report updating information contained in the thirtieth report, of which it adopted and presented to you on 4 March 1998 (A/53/136). The present periodic report has been prepared in order to bring to your attention, and to the attention of the General Assembly, updated information on the human rights situation in the occupied territories.

The present periodic report covers the period from 1 January to 31 May 1998. It is based on written information gathered from various sources among which the Special Committee has selected relevant excerpts and summaries, which are reflected in the report.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) John de **Saram**
Chairman of the Special Committee to
Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting
the Human Rights of the Palestinian
People and Other Arabs of the
Occupied Territories

His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/64 of 10 December 1997, the General Assembly:

> "5. *Requests* the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli lack of compliance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;
>
> "6. *Also requests* the Special Committee to submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem;
>
> "7. *Further requests* the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment of prisoners in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967".

2. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories continued its work under the rules of procedure contained in its first report to the Secretary-General and held the second of its series of meetings from 30 May to 9 June 1998 at Geneva, Cairo, Amman and Damascus. On 28 May 1998, the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations informed the Secretariat of the United Nations (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) that the Government of Sri Lanka had appointed John de Saram, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, as its representative to serve on the Special Committee, with immediate effect, in place of Janaka Nakkawita. The second series of meetings was therefore attended by John de Saram (Sri Lanka), who acted as Chairman, Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal) and Dato' Abdul Majid Mohamed (Malaysia).

3. The situation in the Arab territories occupied by Israel, as it affects the human rights of the civilian population, is described in section II of the present report. The information contained in the report reflects written information received by the Special Committee during the period from 1 January to 31 May 1998. The Special Committee has followed the situation in the occupied territories on a day-to-day basis by means of reports appearing in the Israeli press and in the Arab-language and English-language newspapers published in the occupied territories. It has also examined a number of communications and reports from Governments, organizations and individuals pertaining to the period covered by the report.

4. The geographical names and the terminology employed in the present report reflect the usage in the original sources and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Special Committee or the Secretariat of the United Nations.

II. Information received by the Special Committee

A. General situation

1. General developments and policy statements

5. On 5 January 1998, the Minister of Local Government of the Palestinian Authority, Sa'eb Erekat, condemned an Israeli decision to freeze the full reopening of Hebron's Shehada Street and to reinforce Israeli security arrangements in the area. Shehada Street is a major artery in Hebron, linking the part under the control of the Palestinian Authority to the Israeli-controlled sector. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 January)

6. On 8 January, in a speech made in Jerusalem before Jewish parliamentarians from all over the world, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that Israel refused to revert to the pre-June 1967 armistice lines on the grounds that it could not "go back to being a country that was 10 or 12 kilometres wide". In an appeal to the Palestinian Authority, the Prime Minister also declared that if the Palestinian Authority fulfilled its obligations, such as fighting "terrorism", dismantling "terrorist" infrastructure, confiscating weapons, annulling the articles in the Charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization which called for Israel's destruction, and stopping incitement, Israel would offer a further redeployment. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 January)

7. On 8 January, the Palestinian Authority condemned Israel's announcement of the expansion of the Efrat settlement in the West Bank through the addition of 600 housing units. Efrat lies to the south of Bethlehem on land

belonging to the village of Al Khadr. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 January)

8. On 12 January, the Palestinian Authority General Intelligence raided a warehouse in Nablus where Hamas activists were mixing chemicals for makeshift bombs. Four men in their early twenties were arrested. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 January)

9. On 13 January, the Cabinet reached an agreement on a document spelling out the Palestinian Authority's obligations to maintain security and dismantle the "terrorist" infrastructure in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It made the fulfilment of these conditions an irrevocable prerequisite for any future withdrawals by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). The Cabinet also appointed an inter-ministerial team, consisting of IDF and General Security Service (GSS) personnel, as well as representatives of the Foreign and Internal Security Ministries, to monitor Palestinian compliance. The list of demands set by Israel as a precondition to its redeployment in the territories was rejected by the Palestinians on the grounds that they had honoured all their obligations. Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Sha'ath accused Israel of deception, of "concocting a ploy to make sure that it would not have to implement anything at all". According to Mr. Sha'ath, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was unable to carry out new military redeployment, as required under the Oslo Accords, because of the opposition of several ministers in his Cabinet. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 14 January)

10. On 20 January, during a meeting with President Bill Clinton of the United States of America in Washington, D.C., Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a withdrawal from more than 9.5 per cent of the West Bank on the grounds that he did not have a mandate from his Cabinet for a larger pull-back, which could jeopardize Israel's security interests. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 January)

11. On 23 January, it was reported that the Gush Shalom (Peace Block) movement had distributed a list of Israeli violations of the Oslo and Hebron Accords which was longer than the list of the Palestinian violations compiled by the Israeli Cabinet. Examples included in the list were the safe passages between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which Gush Shalom claimed should have been implemented in September 1994; the promised release of all Palestinian prisoners who had served two thirds of their sentences; and the abolition of the Civil Administration in the West Bank. (*Jerusalem Post*, 23 January)

12. On 24 January, Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin called on Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to join his movement in waging a "holy war" against the "occupiers". Sheikh Yassin called on all the Palestinians to unite in an armed struggle against Israel, charging that this was the only way left to the Palestinians to gain their rights and achieve their goals. (*Jerusalem Post*, 25 January)

13. On 25 January, Israel's insistence that the Palestinian Covenant be revised by the Palestine National Council was reiterated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's communications adviser David Bar Illan. He stated that the Covenant revision was a sine qua non for any further IDF redeployment in the territories. Palestinian officials rejected Israel's demand on the grounds that articles calling for the destruction of Israel had already been annulled in 1996. (*Jerusalem Post*, 26 January)

14. On 27 January, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani pledged to deploy an additional 200 police officers in Jerusalem's Old City and to boost security measures there. "We are planning to install closed-circuit television which will enable us to view most of the streets in the Old City", he announced, indicating that the number of blue (regular) police and the green (border) policemen would also be increased. The Government is said to have been pledging additional security in the Old City for some time, especially following the murder of a yeshiva student there on 20 November. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 January)

15. On 27 January, it was reported that a new study book for elementary schools issued by the Ministry of Education to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the State of Israel ignored completely the existence of the Palestinian people in Israel, the conflict with the Palestinians before and after the creation of Israel, as well as the peace process with the Palestinians over the past years. The book presented the basic concepts of independence and sovereignty, such as the Proclamations of Independence, the State's symbol, the Israeli flag and the national anthem. It surveyed major events in the history of Israel, especially the wars with the Arab States, the absorption of immigration and the peace process. The chapter on the wars of Israel states that the War of Independence broke out when "Arab armies invaded the country and attacked communities and highways. Our soldiers repulsed them and tried to break the siege of Jerusalem. Our forces took control of the centre of the country, the Galilee and the area stretching from the Negev to Eilat. The Old City fell to Jordan". The passage did not mention the long fights between the Jewish settlement fighters and the Palestinians during the first months of the war and ignored the fact that the Arabs had declared war because of their opposition to the Partition Plan, which envisaged the establishment of two States, Jewish and Arab, side by side. The chapter on the "peace process between Israel and the Arab countries", tells of the treaties signed

with Egypt and Jordan. The Oslo Agreements and the peace process with the Palestinians, even the very existence of the Palestinians, were not mentioned at all. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 January)

16. On 30 January, it was reported that the Israeli police had set up a new border guard unit post in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. Israeli sources said the decision was made within the framework of a plan to redeploy inside the Old City in the wake of the killing of a settler two months earlier. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 30 January)

17. On 12 February, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat threatened that the intifada would be renewed and that he would "cross out" the peace accords with Israel if negotiations failed. He also stated that he would declare a Palestinian state in 1999 regardless of the outcome of the peace talks. Mr. Arafat spoke in Ramallah to 400 Palestinians, including Legislative Council members and a delegation of Israeli Arabs, to mark the start of the commemorations of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1948 "Catastrophe" that led to thousands of Palestinians abandoning or being forced out of their homes. Palestinian Authority Minister of Information and Cultural Affairs, Yasser Abed Rabbo, stated that despite the tragedy and suffering, the meeting symbolized the unity of the Palestinian people who were entitled to return to their homeland and seek self-determination and statehood with Jerusalem as the capital. Mr. Arafat's statements drew sharp criticism from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who stated that they were in violation of the Oslo Accords and would lead to their cancellation. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 13 February; *Ha'aretz*, 15 February)

18. On 17 February, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeated his determination to insist on his demand that "terrorists" residing in the autonomous areas be handed over to Israel. Speaking at a meeting in the Knesset with families of "terror" victims, Mr. Netanyahu stated that the Palestinian Authority had to know that if it did not abide by this demand it could not expect any diplomatic returns. The Knesset later endorsed, by a vote of 15 to 3, a concluding statement which averred that "as long as the Palestinian Authority does not fulfil its commitment (to hand over terrorists) within the framework of the Oslo Accords and the written appendices to the Hebron Agreement, Israel will not see itself obliged to fulfil its commitments within the framework of Oslo and will take all legal steps it sees fit to eradicate terror and ensure the security of its citizens". (*Jerusalem Post*, 18 February)

19. On 23 February, it was reported that the Government stood by its position that Israel should retain 64 per cent of the occupied territories during the interim phase of the implementation of the Oslo Accords as a bargaining chip for the final status negotiations. The Palestinian Authority is said to have partial control over 24 per cent of the territories and full sovereignty over 3 per cent of the remaining land. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 February)

20. On 6 March, it was reported that a census by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) revealed a larger than expected population in the West Bank and Gaza. According to Israeli estimates, the population figure was approximately 2.4 million in the West Bank and Gaza and about 170,000 in East Jerusalem. The PCBS figures are at odds with Israeli estimates which state that there are 2.9 million people in the West Bank and Gaza and 323,000 in East Jerusalem. This figure does not include 325,000 Palestinians who have residency rights in the West Bank and Gaza but have been living abroad for over one year. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 6 March)

21. On 12 March, in a direct appeal to Palestinians, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the killing of three Palestinian workers by IDF soldiers at the Tarkumiya roadblock on 10 March "a tragic mistake". He defended, however, the action of the soldiers, stating that they believed they were the target of a "terrorist" attack. Stating that he understood the Palestinians' pain, he called for peace talks to be resumed in order to bring a future of peace and hope for the two peoples and prevent new tragedies. Mr. Netanyahu's remarks were intended to help end Palestinian protests which had swept the West Bank since the incident. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 13 March)

22. On 13 March, Sheikh Hamed Bitawi stated that the incident in Tarkumiya in which three Palestinian workers were killed by IDF gunfire was tantamount to a "massacre" carried out by Zionist occupiers and added that coexistence between the Palestinians and Israel was impossible. (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 March)

23. On 15 March, a senior Israeli official stated that the very fact that British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook intended to begin his visit to Jerusalem the following day with a tour of the Har Homa settlement was "a provocation that supports the Palestinian claim to part of Jerusalem even before the final status talks begin". The source contended that a tour of this kind was something that had never been done before by any other visiting officials and doubted that a similar act would be carried out anywhere else in the world. Mr. Cook, who stated at first that he would visit the site with Palestinian Authority Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, Faisal

Husseini, later recanted under Israeli pressure and stated that he would make a private visit to the site. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed that Israel would soon begin the construction of the controversial neighbourhood. Mr. Netanyahu reiterated his Government's commitment to preserve Jerusalem's current status as the undivided national capital. "Jerusalem", he declared, "remains and will remain forever the indisputable, indivisible capital of Israel". In another development, government officials rejected Mr. Cook's reported advocacy of an IDF withdrawal in the West Bank which would involve handing over to the Palestinian Authority 20 per cent of Area B and 20 per cent of Area C. Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani stated that a pull-back of this magnitude would be a direct blow to Israel's security, indicating that he favoured an evacuation of between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of the areas in question. Speaking in his capacity as chairman of the Third Way movement, Mr. Kahalani also stated that the American proposal of withdrawal from 13 per cent of the West Bank was also detrimental to national security. (*Jerusalem Post*, 16–17 March)

24. On 15 March, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the Cabinet that there was a worrying escalation of incidents in the territories, partly owing to the Tarkumiya incident (in which three Palestinian workers were killed by IDF gunfire). He also stated that he regarded as very serious an incident in which shots were fired from the Palestinian-controlled sector of Hebron into the Jewish quarter and demanded that the Palestinian Authority take firm action to prevent such incidents from recurring. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 March)

25. On 15 March, Ariel Sharon reportedly stated on Israeli television that Israel had not given up on plans to liquidate the head of the Hamas Political Bureau, Khaled Mishal, presently located at Amman. In the wake of the recent Israeli-Jordanian crisis owing to the botched assassination attempt on Mishal in October 1997, the Infrastructure Minister said explicitly that the attempt at liquidation would not occur on Jordanian soil. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 20 March)

26. On 16 March, the West Bank Preventive Security Chief, Jibril Rajoub, warned that settlers entering any Palestinian Authority-controlled area with the intent of harming Palestinians would not leave alive. He also stated that he was suspending security cooperation with IDF in Hebron until further notice. Mr. Rajoub made his statements following an incident in Hebron's Abu Sneinah neighbourhood, during which some 30 settlers smashed the windshields of Palestinian cars and stoned and beat residents. His declarations brought angry reactions from Israeli governmental officials and settlers. "Grave threats lead to an escalation and hot-headedness at a time when we all need to concern ourselves with calming the atmosphere", Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated, adding that the Palestinians did not want to make progress in the peace talks. Noam Arnon, the spokesman for the Hebron Jewish community, stated that Rajoub's remarks exposed the "barbaric and terrorist nature of the Palestinian Authority". "Murders remain murders", he charged, adding that the bubble of the Hebron Accord illusion had finally burst. Aharon Domb, Director-General of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza, declared that "a terrorist wearing a police uniform remains a terrorist". (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 17 March)

27. In his speech on 16 March reacting to the Tarkumiya incident, West Bank Preventive Security Chief Jibril Rajoub demanded that Israel bring to justice those responsible for the killing of three Palestinian victims. He noted that in Israeli prisons there were no Israelis convicted of killing Palestinians. Rajoub stressed there would not be any security cooperation with IDF in the Hebron area until after those responsible for the Tarkumiya killings were put on trial. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 20 March)

28. On 18 March, referring to British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's controversial visit to Har Homa (in Jerusalem), Labour Party Chairman, Ehud Barak, stated that Har Homa was not a settlement. "There is no shred of a doubt regarding our right to construct there", he declared, explaining that Har Homa was unequivocally within the Jerusalem city limits and that all Israeli governments, including Labour, upheld Israel's right to build there. He concluded by stating that a united Jerusalem under full Israeli sovereignty was at the very heart of the Israeli national consensus. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 March)

29. On 24 March, it was reported that the security services had recently stepped up their level of alert in response to warnings of impending attacks by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in Israeli cities and against settlers in the occupied territories. At a recent strategy session, security sources evaluated a series of events over the previous 10 days that were conducive to the new state of heightened alert. These included the incident at the Tarkumiya roadblock where three Palestinians were mistakenly shot dead by soldiers; the growing unrest on the Palestinian streets; the violent eviction of Palestinian "squatter" families by IDF from Israeli-controlled territory; and the deadlock in the peace process. Security sources reportedly stated that the situation in the territories was worse than ever. They claimed that there was growing distrust between Israelis and Palestinians and that Hamas, which had suffered several setbacks at the hands of GSS over the year, was now making a complete recovery by

taking over the Palestinian streets. A worrisome indication of this development, according to the sources, was that Hamas had recruited many female university chemistry students into its ranks over the previous months. Finally, they warned that a "terrorist" attack launched from the controlled areas by the Palestinian Authority against Israel would cause the complete collapse of the peace process. (*Jerusalem Post*, 24 March)

30. On 5 April, the Palestinian Authority arrested three Palestinian men in connection with the assassination of top Hamas activist, Mehyeddin Sharif, on 29 March . According to the West Bank Preventive Security Chief Jibril Rajoub, the three men killed Sharif in an internal power struggle. All were members of the military wing of Hamas, the Izz Al-din al-Qassam brigades. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 10 April)

31. On 6 April, the Government issued a statement accusing the Palestinian Authority of violating the Oslo Accords by being involved in the killing of Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel. According to the statement, 67 Palestinians had been killed and 96 injured since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994. Israeli officials charged that the Palestinian Authority put most of its intelligence effort into monitoring and interrogating suspected Palestinian collaborators. The Government statement indicated that the killing of collaborators violated article XVI of the 1995 Oslo II Accord, which stipulates that Palestinians who have maintained contact with the Israeli authorities would not be subjected to acts of harassment, violence, retribution or prosecution and that appropriate ongoing measures would be taken in coordination with Israel in order to ensure their protection. Palestinian Authority officials were not available for comment on the Israeli Government's allegations. In the past, however, the Palestinian Authority denied responsibility for the killing of collaborators, blaming their death on personal feuds. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 7 April)

32. On 8 April, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described a letter by the Peace Now movement to the United States administration calling for reinforced American efforts to restart the stalled peace process a "disgraceful spectacle". "This spectacle of going to a foreign power so that it will put pressure on Israel", he charged, "is disgraceful". (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 April)

33. On 9 April, Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi who resides in Gaza, stated that Hamas would blame Israel for the killing of activist Sharif a few days earlier. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 10 April)

34. On 12 April, Pope John Paul II condemned what he described as "the dangerous political options regarding Jerusalem which were threatening peace in the Middle East". Diplomatic sources in Rome stated that the Pope had alluded to the Israeli construction in East Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*, 13 April)

35. On 14 April, the Israeli Minister of Infrastructure, Ariel Sharon, presented the Government with a plan providing for the setting up of six new settlements along the "Green Line". Palestinian sources indicated that the new settlement plan is known as "The surroundings of Hebron". According to Palestinian sources, the plan aims to encircle Palestinian towns near the 1967 borders and to set up a row of Jewish settlements to act as a buffer between the Palestinian towns and the State of Israel. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 24 April)

36. On 17 April, it was reported that, according to a study published by the Palestine branch of Defence for Children International, a total of 464 Palestinians in the occupied territories were killed or injured by mines and leftover military material over the past 30 years. The report covered the period from June 1967 through February. Of the 464 victims, 144 were killed as a result of explosions, while 320 were wounded. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 18 April)

37. On 18 April, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat vowed that he would declare statehood in 1999 and implied that the Palestinians could turn to violence if their demands were not met. In an interview broadcast by the Palestinian Authority television, President Arafat stated "we are not in a hurry (but) patience is limited. In 1999 we will announce a state". (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 April)

38. On 20 April, Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour of Jordan stated that King Hussein had warned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the Middle East could be plunged into "destructive darkness" unless peace talks with the Palestinians made progress. (*Jerusalem Post*, 21 April)

39. On 20 April, several ministers of the Israeli Government demanded that the restrictions imposed on settlers concerning open-fire regulations be annulled. Their demand came after an incident in which a Jewish settler from Ma'aon was allegedly killed by Bedouin shepherds in a dispute over land on southern Mount Hebron. The incident reportedly generated fierce criticism from settlers, who blamed the State Attorney's Office and the police for creating an atmosphere that forced them "to think twice before opening fire". (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 21 April)

40. On 21 April, Government officials stated that the Palestinian Authority had deployed 16,000 more police officers than are allowed by the Oslo Accords, making the Palestinian Authority-controlled areas one of the most

heavily policed areas in the world (while Switzerland has two officers per 1,000 residents and Spain 4.5, the Palestinian Authority has 16.7 policemen per 1,000 residents). The Palestinian Authority is allowed to deploy up to 24,000 policemen in the West Bank and Gaza Strip under the 1995 interim agreement. Israeli officials stated, however, that it had employed 40,000 officers, 66 per cent more than are allowed. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 April)

41. On 22 April, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, stated that there was concern that the current impasse in the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians could lead to further violence in the region. Mr. Annan stated that there was considerable frustration among Arab leaders at the lack of progress in the peace process, adding that there was concern that desperate people would resort to violence again unless some progress were made. (*Jerusalem Post*, 23 April)

42. On 23 April, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened to annex parts of the West Bank should Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat unilaterally declare the establishment of a Palestinian state. (*Ha'aretz*, 24 April)

43. On 28 April, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quoted as stating that giving up 6 per cent of the West Bank was "no problem", but that when the limit of 7 or 8 per cent was passed, this became "very difficult". Mr. Netanyahu explained that returning to the Palestinians more that 9 per cent of the land would make it very difficult to protect 40,000 Israeli children who travelled through the West Bank every day. Minister of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon also described the evacuation of more than 9 per cent as "dangerous", indicating that it was essential for Israel to extricate itself from what he described as "the percentage marketplace". Mr. Sharon also warned that attempts to accelerate the process of transferring land to the Palestinians could entail the loss of water resources or sites designated for the installation of early warning devices. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 April)

44. On 2 May, an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 right-wing activists laid a symbolic cornerstone at Har Homa (Jebel Abu Ghneim) and pressed the Government to move ahead with construction there. Among the demonstrators was the head of the Land of Israel Front, Member of the Knesset (MK) Michael Kleiner, who quoted from the sources the story of the Jew who had inherited a pigsty: "The question was what the Jew should do with the pigsty. Shall he get rid of it and lose the inheritance, or shall he keep it? The Talmud determined that he should get rid of it, but little by little, so as not to sustain a great loss". The moral of the fable, according to Mr. Kleiner, was that "the Oslo Accords Netanyahu had inherited could also be done away with little by little, in order to minimize the damage". A counter-demonstration by some 1,000 left-wing activists calling for a halt to the construction of the settlement was held in the wadi below. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 May)

45. On 3 May, the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza and the parliamentary Land of Israel Front threatened to topple the Government in case of a second-phase withdrawal from the West Bank. (*Jerusalem Post*, 4 May)

46. On 11 May, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa stated that the Middle East peace process was embroiled in its deepest crisis ever. "We are in the midst of an unprecedented crisis since the beginning of the peace process", Mr Moussa told Egypt's Nile Television, adding that the current Israeli policies did not augur well for the future of the region. (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 May)

47. On 12 May, Labour Party chairman Ehud Barak declared that Beit El, Ofra and other settlements "are here to stay forever". He stated that his Party had a set of red lines which it would cross under no circumstances. This included a united Jerusalem under full and unequivocal Israeli sovereignty and a settler population which would remain under Israeli rule in large settlement blocks. "Under no circumstances", he promised, "will Israel return to the 1967 borders". Mr. Barak, who made his statements during a tour of five settlements in Judea and Samaria (West Bank), had warm words for settlers and settlements: "I came here to see how the settlements have developed. It is heartening to see so much growth and progress. There are beautiful projects here — the beauty is not only in the projects but is connected to the soul, the soul of Israeli society".Mr. Barak's statements excited favourable comments from settlers. The head of Jewish Communities in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza, Pinhas Walerstein, stated that he would begin looking for a home for Mr. Barak in the Beit El settlement. Other settlers noted that neither Yitzhak Rabin nor Shimon Peres had made comments like Barak's when they were Prime Ministers. Peace Now issued a statement expressing "shock and dismay" at Mr. Barak's remarks. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 13 May)

48. On 14 May, the Palestinian commemoration to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Al-Naqba ("the Catastrophe"), that is, the founding of the State of Israel, turned into a bloodbath in which at least seven Palestinians were killed and hundreds more injured during clashes with IDF troops in the territories. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 May)

49. On 14 May, it was reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had ordered the police to prepare a detailed new security plan for Jerusalem's Old City. The plan is to include stationary police points which would be able to maintain eye contact with one another along the main thoroughfare from the Western Wall to the Damascus and Jaffa Gates. Mr. Netanyahu's directives followed the stabbing to death of a yeshiva student on his way to sunrise services at the Western Wall on 6 May. (*Jerusalem Post*, 14 May)

50. On 14 May, the Director-General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Dani Kritzman, stated that should the European Union revoke trade benefits for settler agricultural produce, the Ministry of Agriculture would revoke all the benefits and advantages given to Palestinian agricultural produce under the Paris Agreements. "I personally undertake not to implement the Paris Accords if this is what the Europeans decide. They have to take into account that I am holding the Paris Agreements hostage", Mr. Kritzman stated, bringing home his point by adding that "should the European Union implement sanctions against Israel or decide that it could define Israel's borders, not a single Palestinian tomato would enter Israel duty-free". Meanwhile, the Ministry was reportedly studying measures and ways to permit continued agricultural export from settlements in the event of approval of the European Commission's recommendations by the Foreign Ministers of the European Union. The measures would make the identification of the origin of the produce impossible. Among other things, the Ministry was examining the possibility of marketing settler produce with labels of farms within the Green Line. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 May)

51. On 15 May, it was reported that the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, had condemned the Oslo Accords and stated that suicide bombings against Israel would continue. Sheikh Yassin made the statement while on a shuttle tour of the Middle East. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 15 May)

52. On 16 May, King Hussein of Jordan criticized what he described as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contradictory attitudes towards peace and stated that Israel was slipping into a fortress mentality. The King was apparently referring to comments by Mr. Netanyahu defending his reluctance to make further withdrawals from the West Bank on the grounds that this exposed Israel to security risks which could not be overlooked for the sake of a peace accord. In a related development, the Group of Eight expressed concern at the stalemate in the Middle East peace process, warning that a continued deadlock could have serious consequences throughout the region. (*Jerusalem Post*, 17 May)

53. On 19 May, the spokesman for the Israeli human rights organization, B'tselem, Yuval Ginbar, said at a press conference that most of those subjected to torture by the Israeli General Security Service, the Shin Bet, were subsequently found innocent and released from prison. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 22 May)

54. On 20 May, a bench of nine High Court judges expressed their annoyance at the fact that the Government and Knesset avoided passing a bill which would regulate the special interrogation methods of the General Security Service, forcing the Court to decide on the matter instead. The Justices made their statement during a hearing of six petitions against the legality of such methods. It was the first time the High Court agreed to deal in principle with the question of GSS interrogation techniques. One of the petitions, submitted by the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, called for a ban on the use of a technique whereby the detainees' hands and feet were bound and a sack placed on their heads, a position in which they were forced to listen to loud music, were deprived of sleep or forced to sit on a small chair. Another petition, submitted by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), called for a ban on violent shaking. The State Attorney's representative, Lawyer Shai Nitzan, argued in response that the use of these interrogation methods was permitted under what the law described as "necessary defence", which meant that a man was relieved of criminal responsibility for an action which he was required to carry out on the spot to save his life, body or property, or those of another, from the danger of serious injury while there was no other way to prevent it. Lawyer Nitzan argued that if the Court accepted the ACRI request for a total ban on violent shaking, it would in essence be throwing out the "necessary defence" argument altogether. That would mean that no matter how crucial the information a detainee possessed was, interrogators would never be allowed to use illegal methods to extract it. Court President Aharon Barak rejected this argument, however, stating that there was a difference between the fact that the "necessary defence" was anchored in law and the insistence that it be granted automatically in advance. Justice Dalia Dorner stated that granting automatic immunity could only be done through legislation. The fact that there was no mention of these interrogation methods in the GSS bill pending in the Knesset, she noted, was astonishing because this was exactly the core of the problem. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 21 May)

55. On 20 May, the Israeli High Court of Justice decided to postpone until further notice issuing a verdict on whether Israel's security service, the Shin Bet, was to be allowed to continue using torture methods against Palestinians

suspected of security offences. The judges also stated that the issue of whether torture was to be banned needed to be decided jointly by the Israeli Government and the Knesset, and not thrust upon on the shoulders of the High Court of Justice. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 22 May)

56. On 22 May, Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin stated that Palestinian suicide bombings would continue regardless of any Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank. Yassin made the statement during the Damascus leg of his tour of Muslim countries, which was aimed at promoting the Hamas movement. (*Jerusalem Post*, 24 May)

57. On 23 May, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and their friend, the millionaire Irvin Moskovitz, the largest donor to Jewish groups who purchased land and buildings in East Jerusalem, took part in the Jerusalem Day celebrations. Mr. Moskovitz, who was crowned the "President of Jerusalem" by master of ceremonies Rabbi Eitan Eisemman, was given a thunderous ovation and promised to do everything he could to assist in the construction of Jerusalem — Har Homa, Mount of Olives and the Old City. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed in his speech that Orient House in East Jerusalem had ceased to operate as the Palestinian Foreign Ministry, as was the case in the days of the former Government. He added that there were no more Palestinian Authority offices in East Jerusalem. Mr. Netanyahu promised that his Government would continue building in all parts of Jerusalem, which would be kept united forever under Israeli sovereignty. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert stated that the construction and strengthening of Jerusalem should not be a subject of declarations only, but translated into action every single day, throughout the day. He reminded the audience that the "Prime Minister promised us on the 1997 Jerusalem Day celebrations that we could soon move to a beautiful neighbourhood overlooking southern Samaria — the neighbourhood of Har Homa."(*Ha'aretz*, 25 May)

58. On 26 May, Hamas founder Sheik Ahmad Yassin stated that he expected the elimination of Israel and the establishment of a Palestinian state over the whole of Palestine during the first quarter of the next century. Addressing a news conference in Damascus at the end of talks with Syrian leaders and the heads of other radical Palestinian groups, Sheikh Yassin also declared that Hamas would continue fighting against Israel "until the liberation of all Palestine". In reply to a question, he also stated that there was no separation between the political wing of Hamas and the Izz Al-din al-Qassam brigades, its military arm. (*Jerusalem Post*, 27 May)

59. On 27 May, Palestinian officials rejected Israel's decision to turn a property in the Old City of Jerusalem into an archaeological site. The proposal was in fact a compromise reached between the Israeli Government and the Ateret Cohanim settlers' group which had seized property in the Old City at Burj Al Laqlaq, near Herod's Gate. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 29 May)

60. On 28 May, it was reported that the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza was intensifying efforts to warn the public as well as government officials of any further withdrawals by pouring millions of new Israeli shekels (NIS) into a huge public relations campaign. The campaign reportedly included plane flights over Judea and Samaria (West Bank) and a film, currently in the early stages of production. In addition to intense lobbying in the Knesset, the Council rented several planes to take Central Committee members of the various political parties for a flight over the territories to view the current state of settlements there and raise their awareness of national and security interests and of water resources which would be jeopardized should any further withdrawal take place. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 May)

2. Incidents resulting from the occupation

61. The following abbreviations of the names of newspapers are used in the tables:

H: Ha'aretz

JP: Jerusalem Post

JT: The Jerusalem Times

(a) List of Palestinians killed by troops or Israeli civilians

Date	*Name and age*	*Place of residence*	*Remarks and source*
5 March	Youth, name not reported	Rafah, Gaza Strip	Shot and fatally wounded by IDF soldiers, allegedly while trying to infiltrate Israel from Rafah in the Gaza Strip. Died of his wounds in Soroka Hospital. (*H*, *JP*, 8 March; *JT*, 13 March)
10 March	Ghaleb or Rhaleb Rajoub, 34 or 36	Dura village	Palestinian labourer. Killed when soldiers manning the Tarkumiya roadblock opened fire on a van carrying Palestinian labourers returning from work in Israel. (*H*, 11 March; *JP*, 12 March)
10 March	Mohammed Sheeda Sharowna, 27 or 28	Dura village	Palestinian labourer killed when soldiers manning the Tarkumiya roadblock opened fire on a van carrying Palestinian labourers returning from work in Israel. (*H*, 11 March; *JP*, 12 March)
10 March	Adnan Jibril Abu Zneid, 35 or 36	Dura village	Palestinian driver killed when soldiers manning the Tarkumiya roadblock opened fire on a van carrying Palestinian labourers returning from work in Israel. (*H*, 11 March; *JP*, 12 March)
17 March	Samer Karama, 13	Hebron	Injured in the head during clashes between IDF troops and Palestinian stone-throwers in Hebron on 11 March. Suffered from serious brain damage and was in a state of cerebral death before dying of his wounds in hospital. (*H*, 13 and 18 March)
6 April	Mohammed Salameh, 25 or 26	Old City of Jerusalem	Shot in the back by police at the A-Ram roadblock in northern Jerusalem. According to the police, was shot during pursuit after failing to stop at the checkpoint. According to an eyewitness, was shot after he had stopped. (*H*, *JP*, 8 April)
6 May	Ahmed Hamed, 21, 22 or 23	Karyut village, near Nablus	Killed by seven gunshots fired by a settler he had stabbed in a car in the Eli settlement. The Palestinian was described by some villagers as mentally unstable. (*H*, *JP*, 7 May; *JT*, 8 May)
13 or 14 May	Khairi Alkarm, 51	A-Tur neighbourhood (Jerusalem)	Knifed to death in the Beit Yisrael neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The police believed that the assailant was a Jew avenging attacks on Jews by Arabs. (*H*, *JP*, 7 May; *JT*, 15 May)
14 May	Samir Fayyad, 35	Khan Younis	Shot in the head by IDF soldiers in clashes with Palestinians in Gush Katif during Al-Naqba demonstrations. (*H*, *JP*, 15 May; *H*, 17 May)
14 May	Kamal Hassnet, age not reported	Gaza Strip	Killed in clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians during Al-Naqba demonstrations in the Gaza Strip. (*H*, *JP*, 15 May; *H*, 17 May)
14 May	Jihad Assi, age not reported	Gaza Strip	Killed in clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians during Al-Naqba demonstrations in the Gaza Strip. (*H*, *JP*, 15 May; *H*, 17 May)
14 May	Zamil Wahidi, 54	Jabalia refugee camp (Gaza Strip)	Nurse. Injured in the heart in violent clashes between Palestinians and IDF troops during Al-Naqba demonstrations in the Gaza Strip. According to the Palestinian Authority's Health Ministry, was shot at while inside an ambulance. (*H*, *JP*, 15 and 17 May; *JP*, 22 May)
14 May	Ashram Arram, 22	Rafah	Shot in the head near the Morag settlement in clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians during Al-Naqba demonstrations. (*H*, *JP*, 15 and 17 May)

Date	*Name and age*	*Place of residence*	*Remarks and source*
14 May	Mohamed Farah Gneid, 22 or 24	Jabalia refugee camp (Gaza Strip)	Shot in the neck near the Nissanit settlement in the northern Gaza Strip during clashes between IDF troops and Palestinian demonstrators. (*H*, *JP*, 17 May)
15 May	Ismail Mohammed Shedadeh, 24	Kalandia refugee camp (West Bank)	Injured in the head by an IDF rubber bullet during Al-Naqba demonstrations in the vicinity of the Kalandia refugee camp on 14 May. Died of his wounds the day after. According to IDF, was one of the rioters who threw stones at IDF soldiers and was shot at, in accordance with regulations. (*H*, *JP*, 17 May)

(b) List of other Palestinians killed as a result of the occupation

Date	*Name and age*	*Place of residence*	*Remarks and source*
29 January	Nadel Abu Salour, 18	Bethlehem	Detained on 6 January on charges of car theft. Died of injuries sustained when trying to commit suicide in the Russian Compound lock-up. The victim's family charged that he was killed by the security forces in a revenge for the killing of a GSS agent by a family member five years earlier. According to the family, Abu Salour was the fifth family member to be killed by the security forces because of the killing of the GSS agent. An autopsy performed by the Abu Kabir Institute of Forensic Medicine in the presence of a doctor appointed by the Palestinian Authority confirmed the claim of the police that the detainee had tried to commit suicide, indicating that there were no signs of torture on the body. (*H*, 30 January and 1 February; *JP*, 30 January)
29 March	Name and age not reported	Not reported	Hamas activist. Killed when a booby-trapped car he was preparing to blow up exploded in Ramallah. (*H*, *JP*, 31 March)
Body found on 29 March	Rabhi Atta Musafar, 48	Mazra Nubani village (Ramallah area)	Major GSS collaborator in the Ramallah area and holder of an Israeli identification card. Shot in the head. (*H*, 31 March)
30 March	Name and age not reported	Not reported	Died of wounds sustained when a booby-trapped car being prepared by a Hamas "terrorist" accidentally exploded in Ramallah on 29 March. (*H*, 31 March)

(c) Other incidents

62. On 31 December, an Israeli woman was critically wounded when "terrorists" in a parked car opened fire on the car she was travelling in near the Ariel settlement. The attackers are believed to have fled to Ramallah and security officials requested cooperation on the matter from their Palestinian counterparts. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 January)

63. On 1 January, thousands of Palestinians held rallies in Gaza, Ramallah and other West Bank towns to celebrate the Fatah Day. Addressing some 3,000 supporters in Gaza, Palestinian Authority President Chairman Yasser Arafat stated "I continue to protect our dream of Palestine, our State, and its capital Jerusalem". In other developments, IDF launched searches in the Ramallah area following reports of shots fired from a Palestinian car at an Israeli vehicle on the Dolev-Beit El road. A fire-bomb was thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the road linking Hatzor to Kochav Hashahar, near the Ofra settlement; no harm or injuries were reported. Two fire-bombs were thrown at a truck travelling east of Nablus. Another fire-bomb was thrown at a vehicle travelling near the Psagot settlement; no harm or injuries were reported in either incident. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 January)

64. On 2 January, two fire-bombs were thrown at the Avraham Avinu enclave in Hebron. No one was injured and no damage was reported. Angry settlers climbed onto

surrounding rooftops and entered the casbah where they scuffled with Palestinians. One 25-year-old Palestinian man was injured in the face by a stone thrown at him by settlers. In response, Palestinian youth threw stones at the settlers; no injuries were reported. Police, who were called in to disperse the crowd, briefly detained a settler and a Palestinian while the security forces conducted thorough searches of Palestinian homes and arrested four suspects. In a separate incident in Hebron, an IDF soldier was slightly wounded in the head by a stone. In another incident, IDF troops manning a roadblock near the Oranit settlement opened fire at and wounded in the leg a 22-year-old Palestinian man who had ignored an order to stop. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 January)

65. On 3 January, an Israeli woman was slightly wounded when stones were thrown at the car she was driving near the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) in Hebron. According to settlers, over 40 violent incidents were registered in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) on 31 December and 1 January, including the throwing of stones and fire-bombs at Israeli vehicles. (*Jerusalem Post*, 4 January)

66. On 5 January, security forces detained a Palestinian woman who was found in possession of a revolver and took her in for interrogation. In another incident, several shots were fired at IDF vehicles at Al-Fawar junction south of Hebron; no injuries were reported. In another development, some 1,000 Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists staged a rally in Hebron to mark the second anniversary of the killing of the "Engineer", Yehua Ayyash. Ayyash's widow urged on the activists to continue to act against Israel. "Ayyash kept his promise and you should now follow his path", she told the crowd who shouted: "Our beloved Ayyash, we shall go to bomb Tel Aviv". The demonstrators also burned the Israeli and American flags and set fire to a scale model of an Israeli bus in a mock suicide bombing attack. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 January)

67. On 6 January, an Israeli woman died of wounds sustained in a "terrorist" attack on 31 December. An incendiary bottle was thrown at a Jewish house in the Abu Tor neighbourhood of Jerusalem; no harm or injuries were reported. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 January; *Jerusalem Post*, 2 and 7 January)

68. On 8 January, some 2,000 policemen were deployed in the Old City of Jerusalem to thwart attempts by Palestinian or Jewish extremists to disrupt public order and undermine security on the second Friday of Ramadan. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 January)

69. On 10 January, a border policeman and some six Palestinians were wounded in Hebron when hundreds of rioting Palestinians threw stones, fire-bombs and an explosive device at IDF troops and border policemen stationed in the town. Israeli security sources expressed concern over the rising tension in Hebron. Settlers also warned that, a year after the signing of the Hebron Accord, the situation in the town was deteriorating rather than improving. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 11 January)

70. On 11 January, it was reported that the police were questioning a *Waqf* security guard who allegedly beat a 36-year-old resident of Jerusalem who tried to enter the Temple Mount on 10 January when it was closed to visitors. Several *Waqf* employees were suspected of hitting the man and throwing him out of the area. (*Jerusalem Post*, 11 January)

71. On 12 January, it was reported that the security forces had recently arrested several Palestinians from the West Bank on suspicion of involvement in planning attacks to be carried out in Israel. In another incident, shots were fired at a military vehicle at the Gush Katif junction in the Gaza Strip without causing injuries. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 and 14 January)

72. On 13 January, it was reported that the security forces had recently arrested dozens of members of a Hamas cell, who planned to carry out attacks in Israeli cities and several settlements in the West Bank. Most of those arrested are said to be residents of the Ramallah and Hebron areas. Some of them confessed to participating in several shooting incidents and planting bombs against civilian and military vehicles in the Nablus area. In another incident, shots were fired at the Gadid settlement in the Gaza Strip. IDF troops responded with gunfire; no harm or injuries were reported. This was the second shooting incident in the Gaza Strip over the past two days. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 13 January)

73. On 15 January, it was reported that IDF soldiers fired tear-gas to disperse a "mob" of Palestinian rioters who were throwing stones and bottles at them in Hebron. According to the Palestinians, the riots were occasioned by the anniversary of the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) massacre. In the Gaza Strip, IDF soldiers and Palestinian policemen came close to opening fire at each other during an unauthorized massive pray-in by Moslems at Gush Katif in protest against an incident in which soldiers shot and slightly wounded a Palestinian driver who had tried to run through a nearby IDF roadblock. During the confrontation, soldiers opened fire at and slightly wounded in the leg another Palestinian driver who ignored orders to halt at an IDF roadblock. There was reportedly an escalation in tension in the Gaza Strip, with daily incidents of shooting at IDF patrols reported during the week. The tension was reportedly

due to work being carried out by Neve Dekalim settlers on land Palestinians claimed as theirs. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 January; *Jerusalem Post*, 15 and 16 January)

74. On 17 January, a border policeman was slightly injured, apparently by a stone thrown by a settler who was aiming to hit Palestinians. In another incident, two border policemen were slightly injured during a stone-throwing incident outside the Kalandiya refugee camp. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 18 January)

75. On 18 January, three Palestinians and a yeshiva student were injured in Jerusalem during a fistfight near the Damascus Gate. The fight apparently broke out when the Palestinians blocked the path of a group of yeshiva students. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 January)

76. On 21 January, scores of Palestinians threw stones and two fire-bombs at IDF troops carrying out infrastructure work in the Gaza Strip. The IDF spokesman stated that no one was injured and that no damage had been caused. He also indicated that Palestinian policemen had intervened and dispersed the rioters who objected to the work aimed at preventing Khan Younis sewage from flowing into the settlements of Gadid and Neve Dekalim. In another development, Israeli and Palestinian security forces successfully detonated 700 kilograms of explosives which were discovered in a Hamas bomb factory in Nablus a week earlier. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 January)

77. On 22 January, IDF troops used smoke bombs and stun grenades to disperse dozens of Palestinian rioters who threw stones at an IDF tractor near Khan Younis. The IDF spokesman stated that dozens of Palestinians had stoned IDF crews as they worked to try to keep a sewage spill from Khan Younis from seeping into the Gadid and Neve Dekalim settlements. (*Jerusalem Post*, 23 January)

78. On 23 January, on the last Friday of Ramadan, Jerusalem police deployed thousands of additional policemen, mainly around the Old City and in East Jerusalem, for fear of attempts by Palestinian "terrorist" organizations or the extreme right-wing Israeli organizations to disrupt or disturb the prayers. Outside the Damascus Gate, dozens of Palestinians threw stones and empty bottles at the policemen who responded by firing rubber bullets into the air to disperse them. Two Palestinians were taken to the hospital after being hit by stones. In another incident in the West Bank, a border policeman was slightly wounded when Palestinians threw stones at a border police jeep outside the Kalandia refugee camp near Ramallah. The IDF spokesman stated that the jeep had been accompanying an ambulance coming to the area to treat the victims of a road accident. In another incident in the Gaza Strip, five Palestinians from Khan Younis were injured, one seriously, during clashes with IDF troops near the Gadid and Neve Dekalim settlements. Palestinian police tried to disperse the rioters but IDF was forced to intervene in a number of cases using tear-gas and rubber bullets to disperse the stone-throwers. This was the third consecutive day of rioting in the area which broke out when IDF troops began working nearby to prevent sewage from Khan Younis from seeping into the two Gush Katif settlements. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 January)

79. On 25 January, security forces set up roadblocks at the entrances to Jerusalem following warnings that "terrorists" were planning to carry out an attack in the capital. (*Jerusalem Post*, 26 January)

80. On 28 January, IDF troops shot and wounded a Palestinian in the leg as he tried to light a petrol bomb and throw it at soldiers during the second day of clashes in Gush Katif in the Gaza Strip. According to IDF, the clashes began after dozens of Palestinians converged on the fence surrounding the Gush Katif settlements and tried to tear it down, throwing stones at IDF troops who arrived on the scene. (*Jerusalem Post*, 29 January)

81. On 29 January, an 18-year-old Palestinian arrested on charges of car theft died of injuries suffered when he tried to hang himself in the shower of Jerusalem's Russian Compound prison, to where he had been brought two weeks before (see list). The detainee, who was from Bethlehem, had been hospitalized at the Hadassah University Hospital since the suicide attempt. (*Jerusalem Post*, 30 January)

82. On 31 January, a 15-year-old yeshiva student from Jerusalem was stabbed in the back by an Arab woman while walking to the Western Wall. Two Arab women were arrested shortly afterwards but were subsequently released. Following the incident, a small group of Palestinian youths threw stones at the police outside the Old City. Six of them were arrested. In Bethlehem, clashes erupted for the second consecutive day between IDF soldiers and Palestinian protesters. Seven Palestinians were injured by rubber bullets while another dozen suffered from tear-gas inhalation. None of the injuries was reported to be serious. The clashes erupted one day after violent protests following the funeral of a Palestinian teenager who died in Israeli custody. (*Jerusalem Post*, 1 February)

83. On 1 February, three Palestinians were injured in a blast in Idna village near Hebron. The IDF spokesman could not comment on reports that the Palestinians had been preparing a bomb when it went off. The spokesman stated that one Palestinian had been seriously wounded and that the two others had sustained slight injuries. Israel Radio

reported that a 10-year-old was among those wounded. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 2 February)

84. On 2 February, IDF troops clashed with Palestinian protesters for the fourth consecutive day outside Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. Scores of Palestinians threw stones and incendiary bottles at soldiers who responded with live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear-gas. One youth was injured in the head and another in the leg. Three girls from a nearby school were taken to the hospital for tear-gas inhalation. Palestinian sources indicated that the riots erupted in response to the death in a Jerusalem prison cell of an 18-year-old Palestinian youth on 29 January. The sources charged that the youth had died as a result of torture. Israel stated that he had died from injuries sustained while trying to hang himself. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 February)

85. On 2 February, Israeli soldiers clashed with Palestinian protesters for the fourth consecutive day outside Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. Israeli soldiers crossing into Palestinian Authority-controlled terrain in pursuit of a group of youths heightened tensions. The situation came close to an armed conflict when Palestinian police aimed and cocked their weapons, demanding that the Israelis go back to their side of the line. The eventual retreat of the Israeli forces calmed the confrontation. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 6 February)

86. On 4 and 5 February, IDF troops arrested four Palestinians from A-Ram village north of Jerusalem. The IDF spokesman stated that the four had in their possession a 9-millimetre handgun, a commando knife and other equipment. He also stated that the four had been taken for questioning to GSS. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 February)

87. On 5 February, a 27-year-old yeshiva student was stabbed inside the Jaffa Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. It was reportedly the second stabbing in the area in five days. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 February)

88. On 7 February, IDF troops fired rubber bullets and tear-gas at Palestinian stone-throwers during a pro-Iraqi demonstration near Rachel's Tomb. According to Palestinian sources, between 8 and 14 Palestinians, including two policemen, and an Associated Press photographer were injured. The IDF spokesman denied there had been any injuries. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 February)

89. On 8 February, pro-Iraqi demonstrations continued in Jenin and Ramallah. Some 3,000 demonstrators staged a march through Jenin carrying Palestinian and Iraqi flags and a scud missile made of cardboard. The demonstrators marched to the offices of the Red Cross shouting "death to Clinton, Britain and Israel" and urged Saddam Hussein to use chemical weapons. A smaller demonstration with 200 participants took place in Ramallah. The United States, British and Israeli flags were burned in both demonstrations. At the end of the demonstration in Ramallah, the protesters clashed with IDF soldiers stationed at the southern entrance to El Bireh. The Palestinian police were deployed along the route leading to the Israeli roadblock in order to block the demonstrators. However, several dozen protesters managed to reach the roadblock and threw stones and empty bottles at the soldiers and border policemen, who responded with rubber bullets, slightly injuring one demonstrator. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 February)

90. On 9 February, thousands of Palestinians rallied in support of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Ramallah, Jenin and Gaza. Carrying Iraqi and Palestinian flags, the protesters called upon Saddam Hussein to attack Tel Aviv with chemicals and missiles. In Gaza, protesters held a mock funeral and burned Israeli flags. In Ramallah, youths threw stones at IDF soldiers manning the roadblocks near the city. Palestinian support for Saddam Hussein was condemned by Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who stated that for many people in the Palestinian Authority the existence of Israel had not sunk in, warning that Israel could not allow a situation where Palestinians denied its existence and called for its destruction. In another incident, an IDF soldier standing at the Tapuah junction was seriously injured when a Palestinian car ran him over before overturning and plunging into a wadi. The Judea and Samaria (West Bank) Police spokesman stated that the police were investigating the incident and that he was unable to confirm whether it was a "terrorist" attack. (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 February)

91. On 10 February, a 21-year-old Arab woman from A-Ram village in northern Jerusalem was arrested at the Ras al-Amud checkpoint after border police had discovered she was carrying a knife. The woman reportedly told investigators that she wanted to stab a security official at random. In another incident in the Gaza Strip, several shots were fired from the autonomous areas into a settler's home in Kfar Darom, narrowly missing its inhabitants. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 11 February)

92. On 11 February, a 40-year-old Jewish immigrant was stabbed to death in the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood of northern Jerusalem in what police said was probably a "terrorist" attack. It was the third knife attack against Jews in Jerusalem in 12 days. An hour after the killing, a Palestinian was slightly wounded when he was stabbed in the Neveh Ya'acov settlement. The motive for the attack was not clear but it appeared that it was not connected to the earlier killing. (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 February)

93. On 12 February, some 2,000 Palestinians marched in solidarity with Saddam Hussein in Nablus and Hebron. "Beloved Saddam, blow up Tel Aviv", was one of the chants reportedly heard in Hebron. The pro-Iraqi march in Hebron turned violent and scores of Palestinians threw bottles and stones at IDF troops who, in turn, fired rubber bullets to disperse them. One Palestinian was slightly injured in the face by a fragmentation grenade thrown at the soldiers . In Nablus, scores of Palestinians tried to reach Joseph's Tomb but were prevented from doing so by Palestinian policemen who formed a protective screen and pushed them back. According to Haidar Aziz, a sociologist and lecturer at the Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, the political situation was pushing Palestinians to despair and the pro-Iraqi demonstrations was how they vented their despair, deep anger and frustration. In another development, a violent confrontation between IDF troops and Palestinians broke out in Gush Katif. The incident began when Palestinians tried to pull down a fence being erected around a piece of land near the Neve Dekalim settlement that the Palestinians claimed was theirs. As tempers flared, Palestinian policemen aimed their weapons at IDF soldiers and border policemen. In the scuffle that broke out, one border policeman was slightly injured in the face with a rifle butt. IDF officers managed to separate the two sides and calm the situation. (*Jerusalem Post*, 13 February)

94. On 15 February, several hundred Palestinians defied a Palestinian Authority ban on pro-Iraqi demonstrations and took to the streets of the Dehaishe refugee camp in support of Saddam Hussein. Protesters held banners and Iraqi flags and some chanted "Death to America", "Death to Israel" and "Beloved Saddam, hit Tel Aviv". Several protesters also burned United States and Israeli flags on rooftops. Palestinian police in the camp did not interfere and the demonstration ended peacefully. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 16 February)

95. On 17 February, hundreds of university students from Bethlehem defied a ban imposed by Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat on pro-Iraqi rallies and staged a demonstration in support of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The students burned United States and Israeli flags and chanted "Oh Saddam our dear, hit Tel Aviv. Oh Saddam, hit it with chemicals". Palestinian police prevented the demonstrators from marching through Bethlehem and confronting IDF soldiers at Rachel's Tomb. In a related development, the military wing of Hamas, Izz Al-din al-Qassam, warned that it would carry out terrorists attacks in Israel if the United States took military action against Iraq. Interviewed on Army Radio, West Bank Preventive Security Chief, Jibril Rajoub, stated that the pro-Iraqi demonstrations were a result of Palestinian disappointment over the breakdown of the peace talks. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 18 February)

96. On 19 February, hundreds of Palestinian students demonstrated in support of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi people in Dura, south of Hebron. The students filled the village streets chanting pro-Iraqi slogans and calling upon Saddam Hussein to bomb Tel Aviv. They also burned United States and Israeli flags. Scores of students continued their march to the nearby Beersheba-Hebron highway where they blocked the road with boulders and stoned passing Israeli cars, including a border police vehicle. IDF troops at the site fired rubber bullets and tear-gas to disperse the demonstrators. One Palestinian was reportedly arrested and Palestinian sources claimed that eight demonstrators were hurt, six by tear-gas inhalation and two by rubber bullets. In another incident, IDF troops dispersed rioting Palestinians near El Fawar village, south of Hebron. The IDF spokesman stated that the Palestinians had thrown bottles at the soldiers and border police. No injuries were reported. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20 February)

97. On 21 February, a source in the security services warned that Hamas was planning to launch new attacks against Jewish settlers and would try to kidnap soldiers. The source revealed that several dozen Hamas activists had been arrested in recent weeks and during interrogation had revealed plans for new attacks. In response, IDF reinforced patrols on West Bank roads, urging soldiers to be on the alert at roadblocks. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 February)

98. On 22 February, an IDF soldier was slightly injured when an explosive device was thrown at IDF troops in Hebron. It was one of three incidents in Hebron involving the throwing of explosive devices at IDF soldiers. In another incident, clashes between IDF troops and pro-Iraqi demonstrators at Bir Zeit University left two demonstrators injured. Four Palestinians were arrested by IDF. Marwan Barghouti, a member of the Palestinian Authority Legislative Council and Secretary-General of the Fatah for the West Bank, claimed that the demonstrations reflected Palestinian frustration at the breakdown of the peace process. In another incident near Bir Zeit, an Israeli civilian and an IDF officer were wounded when Palestinians stoned their cars with heavy stones and cinder blocks. The IDF spokesman stated that the officer was attacked after he had helped evacuate a Jewish settler who was stoned in another incident near Raboud village. In another incident, two border policemen were injured in the Kalandia refugee camp. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 February; *Jerusalem Post*, 24 February)

99. Violent confrontations with IDF troops broke out in a number of areas. On 23 February, pro-Iraqi rallies continued in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The IDF spokesman stated that a border policeman and three settlers had been slightly injured by stones in the West Bank. Palestinian sources claimed that IDF troops had arrested 22 Palestinians in the West Bank and that five schoolchildren and two demonstrators had suffered from gas inhalation; three other people, including a small child, had been injured by rubber bullets. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 24 February)

100. On 25 February, IDF and border police carried out a raid in the Kalandia and Jelazoun refugee camps and arrested six Palestinians suspected of involvement in recent violent activities against security forces and civilians. In addition, troops sealed off an alley at the entrance to the Kalandia refugee camp, which had been used by Palestinians to throw stones at IDF troops. This sparked off a violent confrontation with camp residents who gathered on the surrounding rooftops and threw stones at the soldiers who responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets. IDF jeeps were forced to retreat after coming under a heavy barrage of stones, leaving behind a soldier who took refuge in a local store. Troops using live ammunition to disperse the rioters returned to assist the trapped soldier and took up positions on the surrounding rooftops. The IDF spokesman stated that the security forces had carried out the sweep in response to numerous incidents of Palestinians throwing stones and fire-bombs at Israeli vehicles. The army reportedly warned the Palestinian Authority that it had to prevent further attacks on Israelis. In a related development, IDF is said to have erected additional roadblocks in the West Bank in an attempt to prevent further stoning of Israeli vehicles. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 26 February; *Jerusalem Post*, 27 February)

101. On 28 February, IDF troops caught a 27-year-old Palestinian man from the territories who had tried to smuggle 60 Kalachnikov rifles, 7 hunting rifles, 38 revolvers and large-calibre ammunition from Jordan to the autonomous areas via the Dead Sea. The man was taken by GSS for interrogation. According to military sources, the weapons may have been meant for the Palestinian Authority. The sources indicated that IDF had information from numerous sources that the Palestinian Authority was stockpiling weapons for the eventuality of a military confrontation with Israel and that it was involved in large-scale smuggling of weapons. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 March)

102. On 3 March, it was reported that the Israeli security forces had rounded up dozens of Palestinians in the Hebron area on suspicion of throwing stones and participating in violent demonstrations. A number of Palestinians were released after the initial questioning. The sweep reportedly came in response to a sharp increase in the number of stone-throwing attacks against Israeli civilians and the security forces following the Iraqi crisis. (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 March)

103. On 3 March, Arabs in East Jerusalem staged a commercial and school strike in protest against the Israeli Government's policy in the city. Leaflets calling for the strike stated: "The danger to Jerusalem has never been as great as it is today" and "Israel is carrying out policies that make any city in the world more accessible to us than Jerusalem". Police reported several incidents of violence, including stones thrown at police and passing motorists. No injuries were reported, however. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 March)

104. On 5 March, IDF soldiers shot and fatally wounded a Palestinian man who had attempted to infiltrate into Israel from the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian was rushed to the hospital where he died of his wounds (see list). The incident reportedly occurred when IDF soldiers spotted several Palestinians, some of whom were reportedly armed, approaching the fence separating the Palestinian-controlled area in Rafah from Israeli territory. The victim was fatally wounded when soldiers opened fire at the Palestinians, allegedly after one of them had aimed his weapon at them. No identifying documents or weapons were found on the body. In another development, the IDF spokesman announced that GSS, IDF and Israeli Police had captured a major Hamas cell that operated in the Ramallah, Nablus and Jerusalem areas. The spokesman released the names of five members and indicated that others were also in custody. They were suspected of being involved in two suicide attacks in Jerusalem in 1997 that had killed 22 people and injured 345, as well as in five shooting attacks in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) between November 1995 and May 1997, one of which had resulted in the death of a yeshiva student. Other attacks were also attributed to the cell. In addition, security sources claimed that the cell had planned to carry out a suicide bombing attack in the French Hill settlement in Jerusalem, detonate car bombs in Haifa and in the Ariel settlement, carry out shooting attacks against an "Egged" company bus at the entrance to the Pisgat Ze'ev settlement in Jerusalem, kidnap a member of the Knesset or an IDF soldier, fill a truck with explosives and detonate it near a bus transporting IDF soldiers and lay mines around an army post on Har Grizim. Cell members were also charged with setting up a bomb factory in Nablus where they prepared 700 kilograms of explosives to be used in their attacks. The factory and explosives were destroyed after GSS officials had tipped off their Palestinian counterparts, who raided the premises in January. Cell members were also charged with planning to storm a foreign embassy in Israel

and take hostages there in order to secure the release of Hamas activists detained in Israeli prisons. Military sources stated that the "terrorist" suspects had received orders from the Hamas leadership in Jordan. They, in turn, contacted Hamas activists held in Israeli and Palestinian prisons. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 6 and 8 March)

105. On 8 March, four Palestinians were injured by rubber bullets fired by IDF when scores of Palestinians rioted near the Beit Anoun junction and stoned an Israeli bus and troops. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 March)

106. On 10 March, three Palestinians were killed (see list) by IDF gunfire at a roadblock near the Tarkumiya village, west of Hebron. The incident reportedly occurred when soldiers opened fire at a van with yellow licence plates which was carrying Palestinian labourers returning from work in Israel. The soldiers claimed to have opened fire at the van after it had suddenly swerved and hit a soldier, slightly injuring him, which caused them to believe that they were the target of an attack. According to Palestinian eyewitness accounts, however, the driver had no intention of running the roadblock but only wanted to overtake the long line of vehicles with blue licence plates waiting at the roadblock. A man who claimed to have witnessed the incident insisted that the van was driving slowly and kept going forward until it hit a cement block at the checkpoint. He stated that, all of a sudden, IDF soldiers on both sides opened fire and that later, when the van door opened, two soldiers emptied their guns inside the vehicle, "finishing off the passengers". An army officer who participated in the investigation of the incident also stated that the soldiers had fired like "madmen" at the vehicle from a very short distance of less than 15 metres. Between 30 and 40 bullets were fired during the shooting incident, which lasted some 10 seconds. Outraged Palestinians warned of a second intifada, with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat declaring that the killings were "a massacre in cold blood". Palestinian Authority Minister of Information and Cultural Affairs, Yasser Abed Rabbo, stated that the killings proved that it was still thought in Israel that Palestinian lives were less important. "I find it hard to explain the soldiers' behaviour", Mr. Rabbo told the *Ha'aretz* newspaper, "they fired like madmen. There were 12 people in the vehicle and they just fired, claiming that the vehicle had crossed the roadblock without stopping". "Supposing the brakes had failed", he said, "this does not give the soldiers the right to kill". Palestinian Council member Sa'eb Erekat called for an international inquiry committee to be set up to investigate the incident, while Dr. Ahmed Tibi stated that the policy of "trigger-happiness" had returned. Yasser Arafat's political adviser, Nabil Amer, stated that the incident was one of many acts of incitement against Palestinians that had continued through successive Israeli Governments. Hamas and Fatah called on the Palestinians to step up their confrontations with Israel and avenge the killings. As word of the incident spread, scores of Palestinians took to the streets in Hebron, pelting IDF troops and border policemen with stones, fire-bombs and anything at hand. Shots were also fired at the Jewish Quarter in the town. Soldiers responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets, injuring some 10 Palestinians. There were also riots on the outskirts of Dura and in the nearby El Fawar refugee camp. An increased Palestinian police presence in Dura prevented an outbreak of violence there. (*Ha'aretz*, 11 March; *Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12, 13 and 17 March)

107. On 11 March, some 70 Palestinians were injured, two seriously and the rest slightly to moderately, during riots and demonstrations throughout the West Bank in protest against the killing of three Palestinian workers by IDF soldiers on 10 March. The fiercest clashes erupted in Hebron, where a commercial strike was declared as a sign of mourning. Hundreds of youths and children clashed with soldiers and border policemen along the line dividing the Israeli and the Palestinian-controlled sectors of the town. The protesters threw stones and dozens of fire-bombs at soldiers who responded with rubber bullets, injuring up to 50 Palestinians. At least one border policeman was injured. Clashes also occurred on the outskirts of Dura village, where thousands attended the funerals of the three Palestinians. Twelve residents were slightly injured during confrontations with IDF soldiers at the entrance to the village. Other clashes with IDF soldiers took place in the El Fawar refugee camp south of Hebron and near Rachel's Tomb. Another major outbreak of violence occurred north of Ramallah near the Beit El junction where some 200 students from Bir Zeit University threw stones at settler vehicles. One Palestinian was slightly injured in the leg when he was fired at by a settler who was allegedly attacked by 30 stone-throwing Arabs. Soldiers used rubber bullets and tear-gas to disperse the demonstrators, injuring six people. A border policeman was slightly injured by a stone in the same incident. In Nablus, IDF evacuated about one dozen yeshiva students from Joseph's Tomb as a precautionary measure after the Palestinian police had suspended joint patrols with IDF and stopped coordinating entrance into the yeshiva. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 March)

108. On 12 March, clashes between Palestinians and IDF troops continued in the territories. Confrontations took place in Hebron, near the Psagot settlement, outside Dura, near Rachel's Tomb, Bani Naim and the A-Ram junction north of Jerusalem. The Palestinian Police tried to quell the riots

near Rachel's Tomb and in Hebron. The IDF spokesman stated that during rioting in Hebron some 30 fire-bombs, three explosive devices and countless stones had been thrown at IDF troops who had responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets, injuring 17 Palestinians, three of whom moderately to seriously. In one incident, a smoke grenade thrown at the rioters was picked up by a Palestinian youth and it exploded in his hand. No soldiers were injured during the clashes. Near Rachel's Tomb, scores of Palestinian students threw stones, iron bars and two incendiary bottles at IDF troops who responded with rubber bullets and tear-gas, injuring 16 Palestinians, most of whom slightly. One 20-year-old Palestinian man was seriously wounded in the stomach. According to Palestinian sources, soldiers had also used live ammunition during the confrontation. On the whole, at least 45 Palestinians were injured during the day's clashes. In a separate incident, a 17-year-old Palestinian youth was moderately wounded in Dura by shots fired by a settler whose car was stoned in the village. The IDF spokesman stated that a soldier had been slightly injured near the Psagot settlement. A Palestinian man from Ras al-Amud was moderately wounded when he was stabbed in the orthodox Jewish neighbourhood of Mea She'arim in Jerusalem. He was the third Arab to be stabbed in the neighbourhood over the preceding three weeks. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 13 March)

109. On 13 March, a bomb exploded prematurely near the Damascus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, which slightly injured four or five Palestinians. According to Jerusalem police chief Commander Yair Yitzhaki, the bomb contained 300 to 400 grams of explosives packed into a metal case which a "terrorist" had placed inside an unused utilities box. Police sources stated that had the bomb exploded in the open, it would probably have caused much more damage. Asked why "terrorists" would want to set off a bomb in an Arab neighbourhood, Commander Yitzhaki stated that they might have planned to move it to a Jewish area of the city later but that it went off prematurely. Palestinian officials, however, blamed the bomb on extremist Jews, stating that the incident was part of escalating anti-Palestinian violence in Jerusalem. "The timing of the bomb and the place reveals the party standing behind it, which is the settlers", charged Ahmed Abdel-Rahman, Secretary-General of the Palestinian Authority Cabinet. A Hamas leader in Gaza, Dr. Abdel-Aziz Rantisi, also charged that the explosion was carried out by Israeli extreme right-wing activists or settlers. He also accused Israel of being responsible for the deaths of three Palestinian workers in Tarkumiya, adding that Palestinians were left with only two options: to die or to resist. In other incidents, an IDF officer, a soldier and a border policeman were injured during clashes with Palestinians in Hebron which took place when settlers stormed the Palestinian-controlled area of the town, attacking Palestinians and damaging their property. A border policeman was injured during a stone-throwing incident in Beit Sahur near Bethlehem. Two IDF officers were injured near Dura village. A soldier was injured near the Psagot settlement in the Ramallah area. All injuries were slight. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 March)

110. On 14 March, a 53-year-old Israeli resident of Afula lost both of his hands when a suspicious looking parcel he picked up blew up in a park near Afula's central bus station. The man, who also suffered facial injuries, was in a critical but stable condition after undergoing a surgery. Northern region police chief Commander Alik Ron stated that there was no reason to believe that the bombing was criminally motivated. He stated that it appeared more likely to be a "terrorist" attack, especially in the light of the recent disturbances in the territories. Several dozen residents of the territories were delayed for questioning in Afula but no arrests were made. In other incidents, three explosive devices were thrown at IDF troops in Hebron. Other clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians broke out at the Beit El military junction, near the Psagot settlement (Ramallah area), outside Rachel's Tomb and in Dura village. During the clashes, rioters hurled fire bombs and rocks at troops who fired rubber bullets to disperse them. There was no information regarding casualties. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 March)

111. On 15 March, sporadic stone-throwing incidents were reported in Judea and Samaria (West Bank). An Israeli man notified the military authorities that shots had been fired at his car near Tekoa. Also near Tekoa, Palestinian sources reported that a Palestinian had been shot at by IDF troops. They stated that the Palestinian had been hit by a rubber bullet and was undergoing surgery at a Bethlehem hospital. After initially denying that shots had been fired by IDF troops in the area, the IDF spokesman admitted that a reserve officer had fired at rioting Palestinians and stated that the Military Police would carry out an investigation. In another incident, a Palestinian was injured in Jelazoun when border police fired rubber bullets at stone-throwers. (*Jerusalem Post*, 16 March; *Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 17 March)

112. On 18 March, sporadic incidents involving the throwing of stones at IDF troops took place in Hebron. In Rafah, in the Gaza Strip, hundreds of Palestinians took part in an organized demonstration by the Fatah to protest against the killing of three Palestinian workers at the Tarkumiya checkpoint eight days earlier and the deadlock in the peace

process. The demonstrators burned an effigy of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli flag amid chants of "Allahu akhbar" ("God is great"). West Bank Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti stated that there was growing disenchantment with the peace process and he warned that the tone of the people was changing and would be conducive to an uprising. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 March)

113. On 20 March, Palestinians clashed with IDF troops on the outskirts of Dura, the hometown of the three Palestinian workers killed by IDF troops at the Tarkumiya checkpoint. Palestinian sources reported that one rioter had been injured during the clashes when IDF forces fired rubber bullets and tear-gas to disperse the crowd. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 March)

114. On 21 March, Palestinians attended rallies held in Ramallah and Hebron to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Karameh battle. In another incident in the Shu'afat refugee camp, scores of Palestinians stoned border policemen who responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets to disperse them. Five Palestinians were detained; no injuries were reported. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 March)

115. On 29 March, a Hamas "terrorist" was killed (see list) when a car bomb he was preparing blew up in the Beitunya industrial area of Ramallah. Several other people are believed to have also been injured in the blast, which blew up a section of a nearby building, sending huge blocks of concrete flying into the air. Israeli security officials stated that the fact that the vehicle had Israeli licence plates strengthened their assumption that Hamas had intended to use it in an attack in Israel. The Hamas leader in Gaza, Abdel-Aziz Rantisi, stated that his movement would continue to resist the occupation. Hamas, he stated, did not believe in the peace process and would not accept any concessions of Palestinian land. In another development, the body of a well-known collaborator (see list) was found near the Jericho-Ramallah road, east of the Rimonim settlement. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 30 and 31 March)

116. On 30 March, a Palestinian member of the security forces who had been injured in the explosion of a car bomb in Ramallah the day before died at the Ramallah Hospital (see list). In other developments, Palestinians clashed with IDF troops throughout the West Bank during protests to mark Land Day. Several hundred Palestinians also protested at the Netzarim junction in Gaza. Outside Ramallah, scores of youths hurled stones at border policemen and threw rocks and tyres in the middle of the road. In Jenin, hundreds of Palestinians attended a rally led by the Governor of Jenin. In Bethlehem, hundreds of high school and university students marched towards Rachel's Tomb, chanting "death to America" and calling for a halt to settlement activities. As they approached the Tomb, the demonstrators pelted IDF and border police troops with rocks and stones. The troops responded with rubber bullets. According to Palestinian sources, 17 Palestinians were wounded by rubber bullets fired by IDF in Jenin and Bethlehem. In another incident, Palestinian youths stoned Israeli vehicles and IDF troops near the Jelazone refugee camp and at the entrance to the Psagot settlement. Soldiers dispersed the rioters with tear-gas and rubber bullets. In another development, the majority of shopkeepers in the territories closed their stores, in response to an order issued by the Palestinian Authority calling for a commercial strike. (*Jerusalem Post*, 31 March)

117. On 2 April, it was reported that the man found dead near the car bomb explosion in Ramallah on 29 March (see list) was Hamas bomb mastermind Muhi Sharif. Sharif had been at the top of Israel's most wanted list since the death of Yihye Ayyash, the "Engineer", whom he had succeeded as Hamas' top bombmaker. He is said to have been responsible for the death of dozens of Israeli citizens and the injuring of hundreds more in five suicide bombing attacks in Jerusalem. He had been sought by the security forces for the past two and a half years. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai categorically denied any involvement in Sharif's death. Defence Minister Mordechai stated that his death could have been the work of either "Palestinian elements, Jewish elements or elements from his own group", a reference to Hamas. He also indicated that it could have been a "work accident". Hamas activists maintained that Sharif was killed by Palestinian Authority agents in coordination with Israel. After initially blaming Israel, the Palestinian Authority absolved it of responsibility for the death, which it blamed on Hamas members embroiled in a power struggle over the control of Izz Al-din al-Qassam. Evidence regarding the death of Sharif remained inconclusive, however. In another incident, an Israeli driver reported that shots had been fired at his car near the Telem settlement, in southern Mount Hebron. There were no injuries but the car was damaged. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 2 and 12 April; *Jerusalem Post*, 7 April)

118. On 2 April, thousands of Palestinians joined the funeral procession of Muhi Sharif in El Bireh and called for his death to be avenged. Clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians protesting Sharif's death were reported in most areas of the West Bank. Twenty-seven Palestinians were injured by IDF rubber bullets during clashes in the Bethlehem and Ramallah areas. In Bethlehem, Palestinians threw stones and bottles at IDF troops guarding Rachel's Tomb. Soldiers responded with rubber bullets, injuring 12 Palestinian protesters. Near the Psagot settlement (Ramallah

area), 15 Palestinians were injured by rubber bullets fired by IDF. In other incidents, gunshots were fired at a Jewish guard in the Psagot settlement, causing no damage or injuries. An Israeli motorist was hurt by a stone thrown at his car near Husan and was hospitalized. Other stone-throwing incidents occurred at the A-Ram junction in northern Jerusalem, as well as in East Jerusalem. A "terrorist" who used to plant explosive devices in Israel was arrested at a roadblock at the southern entrance to Ashdod while he was trying to cross into Israel. The man stated that he wished to go to Israel for work. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 April)

119. On 3 April, dozens of Palestinians protesting the death of Muhi Sharif threw stones at soldiers in Abu Dis, south of Jerusalem. Soldiers responded with rubber bullets. Other clashes broke out in the vicinity of Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem where dozens of protesters threw stones at soldiers. There was no information about injuries in either incident, except about a border policeman injured by a stone in Abu Dis. A 65-year-old Israeli man was critically injured in the head by a stone thrown at his car in Bir Nabala village in the vicinity of the Atarot industrial zone in north-east Jerusalem. In an earlier incident, a settler's car was stoned in the same area. In another incident, an Israeli woman was slightly injured when an incendiary bottle hit the vehicle she was travelling in near the Emanuel settlement. (*Ha'aretz*, 5 April)

120. On 3 and 4 April, rallies in protest against the death of Muhi Sharif were held in Gaza, Nablus and Hebron. On several occasions, the rallies turned into violent confrontations and clashes with IDF troops. In Hebron, more than 2,000 Palestinians staged a procession and burned the Israeli and American flags. At the end of the procession, dozens of Palestinians set out towards the line dividing the Palestinian-controlled area from the Israeli area and clashed with IDF soldiers. There was no information about injuries. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 5 April)

121. On 5 April, IDF and border police explosive experts detonated a makeshift bomb placed along the fence separating Gush Katif from Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip. Near the bomb was a note in Arabic which reportedly stated "Death to the Jews". According to security sources, IDF patrols were the likely target of the bomb, which was placed at a point where they are used to passing. In another development, clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians were reported in Beituniya near Ramallah. Palestinian sources stated that seven people were wounded in the fighting. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 April)

122. On 6 April, Israeli police shot dead a Palestinian driver after he had failed to stop at the A-Ram checkpoint in northern Jerusalem (see list). A second man reportedly fled from the vehicle and escaped in the direction of Ramallah. Jerusalem District Police Commander Yair Yitzhaki justified the shooting, stating that the vehicle had driven through two checkpoints. He added that the police had aimed at the wheels of the vehicle but because they were firing from a speeding car, hit the driver instead. Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani also justified the action of the police, stating that they did exactly what they were ordered to do. He also added that the driver should have obeyed the order to stop. "The result is unpleasant that a man was killed", he stated, adding that if the man had wanted to stay alive he should have stopped and followed orders. The victim's family, however, accused the police of lying. The victim's brother claimed that, according to eyewitnesses, the police had shot him when he had stopped and not while the car was moving. One Palestinian witness told reporters at the scene of the killing that the shooting amounted to an outright assassination. He stated that when the man stopped, a soldier came around and pointed his M-16 at him. The man raised his hands and the soldiers then shot him. Following the incident, Palestinians in the area began to attack security officials with stones and a petrol bomb. Several police cars were hit and Israeli buses were stoned outside the Old City. In a separate incident, police arrested two Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem on suspicion of intending to kidnap a soldier or an Israeli citizen. The two were found with a pistol, a toy gun, stockings to be used as masks and handcuffs. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 8 April)

123. On 7 April, between 200 and 300 Palestinians took part in the funeral procession of a Palestinian man who had been shot dead by the Israeli police a day earlier. The mourners marched from the Al-Aqsa Mosque to a cemetery outside the Old City Walls shouting nationalist slogans and threats against Israel. The procession was relatively peaceful and there were no reports of disturbances. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 8 April)

124. On 10 April, it was reported that hundreds of troops were deployed and placed on high alert in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) for fear of attacks by Hamas. (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 April)

125. On 11 April, dozens of Hamas activists staged a demonstration in Nablus. A model of an Israeli bus and Israeli flags were burned during the demonstration. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 April)

126. On 15 April, the Jerusalem Police questioned Faisal Husseini, the Palestinian Authority Minister for Jerusalem

Affairs, after they had arrested an Orient House guard with a false identification card and a weapon belonging to Mr. Husseini. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 16 April)

127. On 16 April, IDF troops arrested two Palestinians who had allegedly tried to infiltrate into the Atzmona settlement in the southern Gaza Strip. The troops, which were on an operational mission, detected the Palestinians and arrested them. They were reportedly taken for interrogation by GSS. (*Ha'aretz*, 19 April)

128. On 17 April, a makeshift bomb exploded along the patrol fence surrounding the Gush Katif settlement without causing any harm or injuries. During searches of the area, IDF detected a second device which was detonated by IDF sappers. In a separate incident in the Gaza Strip, IDF arrested several Palestinians who tried to infiltrate into the Atzmona settlement. The Palestinians were taken for questioning in order to discover whether their motives were criminal or whether they planned to carry out a "terrorist" attack. IDF lodged a serious protest with the Palestinian Police, stating that should such incidents occur again, there would be a harsh response by IDF. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 19 April)

129. On 18 April, Palestinian protesters demanding the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails clashed with police in East Jerusalem during a demonstration marking the annual Palestinian Prisoners Day. The Palestinians marched along a major thoroughfare but were stopped by the police who ordered them to disperse. The marchers smashed shop and car windows and threw stones and bottles at the police, who responded with rubber bullets, injuring an undisclosed number of them. Five Palestinians were arrested. Five Israeli policemen were injured during the clashes. In Hebron, another march was staged in support of Palestinian prisoners, with protesters carrying placards saying "There can be no peace with Israel unless the Palestinian prisoners are released" and "The prisoners are the heart of the Palestinian issue now". The march ended peacefully. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 April)

130. On 19 April, a 29-year-old settler from Ma'aon was shot dead by Bedouin shepherds on a ranch situated on disputed land in Mount Hebron. Two settlers and up to four Palestinians were also wounded in the incident, which security sources stated had started as an argument in a continuing land dispute and had ended violently when the Bedouin shepherds snatched the settlers' arms and shot them before fleeing to the nearby Yatta village. The settlers charged that the shepherds had waited for them in ambush before attacking them. The police spokesman stated that nine Bedouins had been detained for questioning. In another incident in the Gaza Strip, border police sappers dismantled an explosive device which was found near the security fence dividing the Palestinian autonomous area from Gush Katif. It was the third bomb to be discovered in the coastal area of Gaza during the previous few days. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 20 April)

131. On 19 April, a Jewish settler, Dov Driban, was killed and a Palestinian shepherd was seriously wounded during clashes near the Ma'aon settlement in the Hebron area. Palestinian shepherds stated that the fight started when Driban attacked Mousa Dababsheh with a stick. Another settler, trying to fire at the shepherd, fatally hit Driban and wounded Dababsheh. Driban, who had dedicated himself whole-heartedly to the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, had killed shepherd Issa Musif a few months earlier. He also once knocked down a Palestinian farmer with his tractor. IDF arrested nine shepherds. Settlers responded to the incident by burning four tents in the vicinity and placing new mobile homes on the site as a prelude to the addition of a new Jewish neighbourhood to the settlement. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 24 April)

132. On 21 April, the police, IDF and GSS detained for questioning 38 Palestinians from the Yatta village area on suspicion of involvement in the murder of a settler from Ma'aon and the wounding of two others on 19 April. Most were later released but 10 remained in custody. The spokesman for the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police stated that the arrests brought to 17 the number of suspects held. Palestinian sources claimed that the security forces had searched some 30 houses in Yatta and questioned their occupants. (*Jerusalem Post*, 23 April)

133. On 22 April, Colonel Tareq Zaid, Palestinian Police Commander for the Hebron region, told a news conference in Yatta that the settler who was killed on 19 April was shot at with a gun wielded by another settler and not by any of the nine Palestinians who had brought their flocks to graze on the Ma'aon ranch that day, as claimed by settlers. The Commander stated that the settler was struck by bullets from a weapon wielded by one of the other settlers as they tried to drive off the Palestinians. He stated that his investigation was based on an eyewitness account and other evidence. Israeli police sources immediately dismissed his assertion. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 April)

134. On 26 April, an IDF patrol in the Jordan Valley shot and seriously injured in the chest an unarmed 28-year-old Palestinian man who had tried to cross into Jordan near Na'aran, in the vicinity of Jericho. The man was transferred by IDF helicopter to the Hadassah University Hospital,

where he underwent surgery for a slight to moderate chest wound. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 28 April)

135. On 6 May, a 28-year-old yeshiva student was stabbed to death on his way to morning prayers at the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem. He was attacked by two men presumed to be Arabs who stabbed him in the back and face with a knife in what police said was a planned ambush. In another incident, a settler shot and killed a Palestinian man (see list) who had stabbed him with a knife in the Eli settlement in Samaria (West Bank). The incident reportedly occurred when the settler, who was driving his car along a road linking two neighbourhoods in the 350-family settlement, was hailed by a Palestinian at the roadside. As the settler rolled down his window the Palestinian drew out a knife and stabbed him close to the armpit. The settler then pulled out his gun and shot the Palestinian who died of his wounds shortly thereafter. In another incident, a Palestinian tried to stab an IDF soldier in the casbah in Hebron. The soldier opened fire and the Palestinian was arrested and transferred to GSS for questioning. In another incident, undercover border police opened fire at a Palestinian vehicle in Beit Hanina in Jerusalem, injuring two passengers, including the UNRWA director of the Shu'afat refugee camp. The police reportedly suspected that armed Palestinian policemen were travelling in the vehicle. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 7 and 8 May)

136. On 6 May, an unconnected series of killings involving both Palestinians and Israelis were reported. A Jewish settler was killed by unknown assailants on Al-Wad Street in the Old City of Jerusalem. The settler was a member of the extremist settler group, Ateret Cohanim. Unknown assailants, believed to be settlers, gravely wounded two Palestinians in a drive-by shooting in Beit Hanina in northern Jerusalem. Another Jewish settler, from the settlement of Alei, fired 11 bullets and killed a Palestinian youth near the village of Qaryut, in the Nablus area. A Palestinian youth was arrested by IDF on charges that he had tried to stab an Israeli soldier on Shuhada Street which separates the Palestinian Authority-controlled area of Hebron from the sector controlled by Israel. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 8 May)

137. On 7 May, a Palestinian labourer from East Jerusalem was moderately wounded when he was stabbed in the back in the orthodox neighbourhood of Mea She'arim in Jerusalem. Police stated that it was the fifth stabbing in the same neighbourhood in six months and was apparently in revenge for the stabbing to death of a yeshiva student a day before. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 8 May)

138. On 13 May, an Arab construction worker was knifed to death in Jerusalem on his way to work (see list). The police believed that the assailant was a Jew avenging attacks on Jews by Arabs. Palestinian Legislative Council member Hatem Abdul Khader stated that he had information confirming that a Jewish terrorist militia was working in the Jerusalem area against Arab citizens. "We had warned Israel many times that it must set limits on the practices of settlers, but terrorist aggression against Palestinian citizens is increasing", he charged. In another development in Gaza, an estimated 1,000 Palestinians from the Fatah and Hamas demonstrated against Israel as part of protests to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Al-Naqba (the Catastrophe), that is, the creation of the State of Israel. Speakers called for a renewal of the intifada as protesters burned Israeli flags and effigies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Other protest marches were held in several areas of the West Bank, including Tulkarm and the Dehaishe refugee camp outside Bethlehem. (*Jerusalem Post*, 14 May)

139. On 13 May, a Palestinian labourer was stabbed to death on his way to work in West Jerusalem. This was the fifth stabbing to have occurred in a month in the area of the religious school (yeshiva) in the Jewish Orthodox quarter of Mea Shearim. None of the other stabbings were fatal. The Israeli police believe the labourer was killed to avenge the death of a settler who had been gunned down by unknown assailants in the Old City a week earlier. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 15 May)

140. On 14 May, between 7 and 10 Palestinians were killed (see list) and 300 to 400 wounded, up to 13 seriously, during clashes throughout the territories between IDF troops and Palestinian demonstrators marking the fiftieth anniversary of Al-Naqba (the Catastrophe), that is, the founding of the State of Israel. According to the Palestinian Authority, nearly one quarter of those wounded were under the age of 14. The Palestinian Authority's Health Ministry issued a statement accusing Israeli forces of aggression against Palestinian ambulances that were evacuating the wounded. The statement stressed that shooting medical personnel violated international law. Thirteen soldiers and two Israeli citizens were slightly injured by stones and incendiary bottles during the same clashes. IDF officers stated that Palestinians were exaggerating the number of Palestinians wounded on purpose. OC Judea and Samaria (West Bank), Brig.-Gen. Yitzhak Eitan, stressed that no live ammunition had been fired by the Israeli security forces in the West Bank. The IDF spokesman stated that in Gaza, troops fired live ammunition only when their lives were in danger. Otherwise they used rubber and plastic bullets and tear-gas to disperse the rioters. Reacting to the clashes, Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blamed the Palestinian Authority for stirring up hostility towards Israel. He made no reference to the fact that human lives were lost. In the Gaza Strip, clashes broke out at the Gush Katif, Netzarim and Morag junctions when hundreds of Palestinians marched towards IDF soldiers, throwing stones and incendiary bottles. In some of the clashes, gunshots from light weapons were fired at the soldiers, who responded with gunfire. The most severe rioting occurred at the Erez checkpoint, where Palestinians mobbed a police post and headed for the IDF checkpoint less than one kilometre away. IDF troops lobbed tear-gas grenades but soon resorted to live fire in order to disperse the crowd. Palestinian sources stated that at least three people had been killed and some 72 wounded in that clash. Other Palestinians were killed in clashes with troops outside the junction near the Gush Katif and Morag settlements. According to Palestinian sources, some 200 Palestinians were injured, most slightly, during other clashes in the West Bank. The most violent confrontations broke out in Hebron, where 96 Palestinians were wounded by IDF gunfire, including a 24-year-old youth who was critically injured. Eyewitnesses reported that hundreds of Palestinians had thrown stones and other objects at soldiers, who responded with plastic bullets, tear-gas and later with live ammunition. In Bethlehem, 25 Palestinians were injured near Rachel's Tomb when hundreds of marchers attacked soldiers, who responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets. Five Palestinians were wounded in Jenin. In Ramallah, thousands of demonstrators headed towards an IDF checkpoint on the road to Jerusalem. Several of the demonstrators pulled out guns and began firing in the air. The clashes began as soon as the demonstrators arrived at the checkpoint. Palestinian sources reported that 90 demonstrators had been injured. Other violent clashes occurred in the vicinity of the Psagot settlement and the Kalandia refugee camp. In East Jerusalem, the march marking the anniversary of Al-Naqba was forcibly dispersed by police and border police forces. During ensuing riots in A-Zahara and Salah el Din streets, Palestinian youths threw stones at police and border policemen who responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets, injuring five people, one seriously. The police reported that one border policeman was slightly injured by a stone. Clashes also broke out in the Shu'afat refugee camp, where youths blocked roads, set garbage containers on fire and threw stones at the border police. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 May; *Jerusalem Post*, 22 May)

141. On 14 May, eight Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip and hundreds wounded, eight critically, in clashes during ceremonies marking the fiftieth anniversary of Al-Naqba (the Catastrophe). The event was christened "The March of the One Million". In a separate development, a fire-bombing incident was reported at one of the outer gates, Bab Al Ghwanmeh, of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Islamic Higher Council suspected Jewish settlers in the Old City to be behind the act. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 15 and 22 May)

142. On 16 May, clashes between Palestinians and IDF troops continued in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Long clashes were reported in Hebron where Palestinian demonstrators threw stones and fire-bombs at IDF troops, who responded with rubber bullets and tear-gas, injuring at least five Palestinians. Other clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians broke out in the vicinity of the Jelazone refugee camp where protesters threw stones and incendiary bottles at soldiers. IDF reported that an IDF officer and a border police officer were slightly injured by a stone. In another incident, an Israeli woman was slightly injured when stones were thrown at her vehicle at the Tapuh junction near the Ariel settlement south of Nablus. At the Al-Najah University in Nablus, an exhibition organized by the Islamic bloc to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Al-Naqba was attended by some 1,000 students. An Israeli flag was spread at the entrance to the exhibition hall, forcing the visitors to tread on it. Students also stabbed an effigy of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In the Old City of Jerusalem, Muslim worshippers threw stones at the Western Wall, compelling the police to order Jewish worshippers to vacate the plaza. Two border policemen were injured by stones. *Waqf* officials managed to calm the demonstrators and halt the stone-throwing within several minutes and the police allowed Jewish worshippers to return to the Wall. In another incident in East Jerusalem, a small group of Palestinian teenagers threw stones at border policemen on Salah el Din Street, slightly injuring three policemen and damaging a number of parked cars. The police responded with rubber bullets, slightly injuring three youths. Eighteen Palestinians were detained for questioning. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 17 May)

143. On 16 March, it was reported that 17 Palestinians who had been injured during clashes with IDF troops in the Gaza Strip remained hospitalized. According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, 71 Palestinians were injured by IDF soldiers during Al-Naqba demonstrations in the Gaza Strip, 47 by live ammunition and 25 by rubber bullets. Dozens of others were injured by tear-gas inhalation and treated on the spot. Twenty were rushed to hospitals but were later released. Fifty-two of the casualties were injured in the upper part of the body. Twenty-nine were under the age of 18. According to the human rights organization and

the Commander of the Palestinian security forces, the fact that most of the casualties were injured in the upper part of the body proved that IDF soldiers had shot to kill and not to deter or keep protesters away. They stated that the killing of a male nurse and the numerous attacks against the ambulance he was travelling in proved their claim. According to the Director-General of the Palestinian Authority Information Ministry, the direct shootings had fomented the situation and increased the number of people who threw stones and came near the settlements. Eyewitnesses claimed that soldiers at the Gush Katif junction had opened fire before being stoned. In any case, Palestinians claimed that on the three sites of clashes (the Morag settlement, Gush Katif junction and the Erez industrial zone), soldiers had not faced life-threatening danger which justified the deadly shootings. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 May)

144. On 24 May, some 50,000 right-wing activists staged a parade through the Old City of Jerusalem as part of the thirty-first annual Jerusalem Day celebrations. At Nablus Gate, the activists exchanged words with Palestinian youths after the marchers had verbally abused and spat at the Palestinian youths, according to eyewitnesses. At one point, the Palestinians started throwing stones and empty bottles at the marchers and police. Another confrontation occurred in the vicinity of Herod's Gate, where Palestinians threw stones and bottles at the marchers and police, slightly injuring two marchers. In a separate incident in East Jerusalem, three incendiary bottles were thrown at the Jewish enclave in Ras-al Amud. The bottles exploded on the road adjacent to the settlers' building without causing any injuries. In another development, clashes between IDF troops and Palestinian demonstrators occurred near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. There was no information about casualties. In another development, it was reported that the police had arrested eight Palestinians suspected of stoning Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall from the Temple Mount the previous week. Further arrests were expected. (*Jerusalem Post*, 24 May; *Ha'aretz*; *Jerusalem Post*, 25 May)

145. On 22 May, it was reported that some 20 Palestinians had been wounded in Hebron the previous week in ongoing clashes which had erupted at the contact points of Shuhada and Shalala Streets, between the Palestinian-controlled and Israeli-controlled sectors of Hebron. IDF closed down about 200 shops following the throwing of a Molotov cocktail in the direction of the inner city settlement of Beit Hadassah. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 22 May)

146. On 23 and 24 May, sporadic clashes were reported in Jerusalem and its surroundings during Israel's celebration of Jerusalem Day. Eyewitnesses claim that mounted police and border police beat several Palestinians, including an eight-year-old boy, with batons and horsewhips in the Damascus Gate area. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 29 May)

147. On 28 May, it was reported that GSS, with the help of the Jerusalem Police Minority Division, had recently arrested an Arab woman from Samaria (West Bank) suspected of stabbing a 15-year-old yeshiva student outside Damascus Gate on 31 January. A police spokesman stated that the woman had confessed to the stabbing and re-enacted it. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 May)

148. On 28 May, several Palestinian youths clashed with settlers who had forced their way past the Palestinian checkpoint near the Shrine of Nabi Yousef at the eastern entrance of Nablus. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 June)

B. Administration of justice, including the right to a fair trial

1. Palestinian population

149. On 8 January, it was reported that according to the ruling of a Jerusalem District Labour Court, settlements were to pay Palestinian employees according to Israeli law. The Court ruling came in response to a request filed by the Givat Ze'ev Local Council to annul a claim by Palestinian employees against it on the grounds that the law in force in the case of Palestinians was the local law in Judea and Samaria (West Bank), which included Jordanian law and legislation concerning security. (*Ha'aretz*, 8 January)

150. On 11 January, the Israeli High Court of Judges reviewed the interrogation methods used on Palestinian detainee Abdel Rahman Ghneimat. The panel decided that it would not oppose such methods for the duration of his detention, at least in the immediate future. A similar review panel reached the same verdict on 7 January when considering the case of Fuad Qur'an, a Bir Zeit student. Qur'an and Ghneimat have similar cases in that both have had their detention periods extended repeatedly and have been subjected to torture several times. The Israeli military court also denied Ghneimat access to his lawyer. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 January)

151. On 13 January, the Lod Military Court sentenced four Druze residents from Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights to prison for injuring IDF soldiers and damaging state-owned property. Two were sentenced to seven and a half years of imprisonment plus a two and a half year suspended sentence. One was sentenced to 15 months of imprisonment, plus a 21-month suspended sentence. The fourth defendant was

sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment plus a one and a half year suspended sentence. (*Ha'aretz*, 14 January)

152. On 22 January, an Israeli district court ruled in favour of a settler group and against a Palestinian family in a case of ownership and possession of a home in the Aqbat Al Khaldiyeh Quarter in Jerusalem. The owner, Naelah Zarou, has appealed the court's ruling. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 30 January)

153. On 27 January, it was reported that the Military Advocate-General, Uri Shaham, had ordered closed the investigation into the circumstances in the death of a 14-year-old Palestinian boy from Tubas village in the northern West Bank who was killed on 19 January 1997 by the explosion of an artillery bomb while herding sheep and goats in Wadi el Maleh in the vicinity of his village. According to the residents' testimonies, the area where the explosion occurred was not fenced and belonged to the victim's family. Following the incident, the Tubas Council head, Diab Abu Hazran, told the Association of Physicians for Human Rights that tens of thousands of dunums of land of the 310,000 dunums owned by Tubas and the surrounding villages had been declared "closed military zones" although the land belonged to the residents and was their means of livelihood as farm and pasture land. Mr. Abu Hazran also stated that IDF did not hold its exercises on a specific, fixed piece of land but seized tens of thousands of dunums, thereby destroying whole areas and endangering the residents' lives by leaving behind remains of ammunition. The IDF Criminal Investigation Division, which had opened an investigation into the death, concluded that the fire practice area where the incident occurred was not fenced but that signs had been posted at the entrances two months before the incident. It also observed that the headmen of villages in the area had been notified more than once of the fact that the area was a fire practice zone and that residents had been evacuated from there several times during the months preceding the incident. It also pointed out that while the victim's father had stated that his son used to herd their sheep in the area without knowing it was a fire practice zone, other family members reported that they knew that it was a fire practice area but continued to herd their sheep and goats there for lack of other alternatives. In the light of the aforementioned, the Military Advocate-General decided to close the file. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 January)

154. On 1 March, the Lod Military Court remanded for an additional 10 days a Palestinian man charged with funnelling funds from the United States-based Holy Land Foundation to families of dead or imprisoned Hamas activists. Maj-Gen. (ret.) Oren Shahor, the former Government Coordinator for the West Bank and Gaza, stated in this connection that Hamas had for years built itself up using money supposedly destined for charity. "These funds", Shahor told Israel radio, "enable the underwriting of both 'terrorist' actions and provide assistance to those they call the victims of activities on their side — murderers or, more accurately, families of murderers". (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 March)

155. On 1 March, the Lod Military Court sentenced a member of a Hamas cell from Tsurif, which had planned numerous attacks against Israelis, to 20 months of imprisonment. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 March)

156. On 1 March it was reported that two members of the so-called Surif cell appeared in Lydda court to face charges of membership in the Qassam Brigade and for plotting suicide attacks against Israeli targets. The two, Abdel Rahman Ghneimat and Jamal El-Hour, both from the village of Surif, near Hebron, were abducted by Israeli soldiers in November 1997 while being transported by the Palestinian Preventive Security from Hebron, where they were being held in detention, to Nablus. The two have been on a hunger strike since 17 February in protest against their torture and ill-treatment in the Israeli prison. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 6 March)

157. On 8 March, the Lod Military Court sentenced two Palestinians from Sur Baher (East Jerusalem) to 19 and 21 months in prison for belonging to Hamas, for planning to abduct and murder IDF soldiers, for handing out Hamas leaflets, for transferring messages to Hamas activists in prison and for throwing stones at the security forces. The two defendants reportedly pleaded guilty. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 9 March)

158. On 17 March, OC IDF troops in the West Bank extended the administrative detention of a Palestinian suspected of perpetrating security offences only a few days after a military judge had ordered his detention period to be shortened. The detainee's attorney was reportedly told by the military advocates that an army officer was authorized in certain cases to overturn a military judge's ruling. In response, the detainee's lawyer sent a letter to the military advocate's office stating that this claim turned military judges deliberating on appeals against detention orders into mere advisers and rendered the right to appeal totally ineffective. (*Ha'aretz*, 18 March)

159. On 19 March, it was reported that Palestinian security detainees in Meggido Prison who were awaiting trial had decided to boycott the Lod Military Court because of serious complaints that they had against its president, Lieutenant Colonel Yoram Nachniel. The detainees had been complaining for a long time that the sentences meted out by Justice Nachniel were harsher than those handed down for

the same offences in other military courts. They also charged that Justice Nachniel tended not to honour plea bargains between the prosecution and the defence and meted out harsher sentences than those agreed upon. According to the detainees, Justice Nachniel was particularly strict and rejected plea bargains because he resided in a settlement (Elkanah). For example, on 9 March, he rejected a plea bargain concerning a detainee held since 1994 on suspicion of belonging to and carrying out actions on behalf of Hamas. The defence and the prosecution had agreed to appeal for an eight year prison sentence, while Justice Nachniel had handed down a sentence of 11 years plus a three year suspended sentence. The detainees also cited the case of three family members whom they claimed were accused of the same offences. According to the detainees, the two who were tried in Adura'im were sentenced to three and a half months in prison while the third, who was tried in Beit El, was sentenced to 30 months. According to the detainees, these cases were the last straw. (*Ha'aretz*, 19 March)

160. On 30 March, the Lod Military Court sentenced a 20-year-old Hamas "terrorist" to four years in prison for planning to set off a bomb in the Jerusalem Mall and kidnap Mayor Ehud Olmert. (*Jerusalem Post*, 31 March)

161. On 13 April, it was reported that a judge of the High Court of Justice had issued an interim order instructing the Civil Administration to refrain from evicting 22 members of the Jahalin tribe from their places of residence. The judge also ordered the Civil Administration to refrain from destroying the petitioners' tents and tin shacks pending a ruling on their appeal by a bench composed of three judges. The Jahalin tribesmen appealed to the High Court, demanding that the Civil Administration revoke the demolition orders against their tin shacks and tents or suspend their execution until a permanent solution was found regarding their place of residence. (*Ha'aretz*, 13 April)

162. On 22 April, the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court rejected a request by a resident of the Gaza Strip to order IDF to compensate him for a severe disability he allegedly suffered as a result of an incident in which IDF soldiers had thrown him from his rooftop. The man, Nasser Nassman, aged 38, claimed that in January 1988, soldiers had stormed his rooftop where he was with his family, beat him and all those present and then threw him over the railing down two floors. As a result of the fall, he suffered a 65 per cent disability, including paralysis of the legs. In its ruling, the Court stated that the claimant had failed to provide sufficient evidence in civil suits that the injury he had sustained was caused by soldiers when they threw him from the rooftop. The justice explained that the versions of the incident described by the claimant and the witnesses who had appeared on his behalf were so full of contradictions as to make the claim unreliable. Regarding the question of how the injury had been sustained, the justice observed that "it should not be excluded that for some reason, Nassman had tried to escape from the roof and since the houses are located one near to the other, he thought that he could jump over to another roof — but fell instead". (*Ha'aretz*, 23 April)

163. On 3 May, the Lod Military Court sentenced Hamas "terrorist" and gang member from Tsurif, Riad Abu Hamadia, to four consecutive life sentences plus five years for his role in plotting and carrying out "terrorist" attacks in which nine Israelis were killed. Hamadia, aged 22, confessed to the charges against him, claiming that he had acted to protect the rights of Palestinians. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 May)

164. On 7 May, the Military Court of Appeals handed down harsher sentences against two Arabs convicted of planning to kidnap soldiers and pursuing other activities in that connection. One of the defendants, who had previously been sentenced to 21 months in prison, had his prison term extended to 27 months, while the other defendant had his prison term extended from 19 months to 25 months. The Court accepted the prosecution's claim that harsher sentences should be handed down as a deterrent, in the light of the fact that the kidnapping of soldiers had become a common task for "terrorist" organizations. Still, the Court found that the fact that the defendants had admitted to the charges against them and were minors at the time the offences were committed constituted extenuating circumstances. (*Ha'aretz*, 8 May)

165. On 14 May, the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court rejected a claim by the family of Sami Abu Jamma, a resident of Rahat who was killed during clashes with police following the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre, to order the State to pay them NIS 1 million in compensation. The justice ruled that there was no evidence that the bullet that hit Abu Jamma was fired from a police weapon and that even if this had been the case it could be ruled that the shooting was carried out in self-defence. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 May)

166. On 17 May, a religious Jewish Haredi court issued an unprecedented ruling branding as a fugitive from the law a member of its community suspected of stabbing five Arab workers in the Mea Shearim Quarter of Jerusalem over the past few months. The most recent attack cost 51-year-old labourer Kheiri Alqm his life. The ruling also asked the members of the community to cooperate with the police in tracking down the killer. The ruling marks the first cooperation in 50 years between the ultra-orthodox

community and the Israeli State. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 22 May)

167. On 27 May, the Lod Military Court sentenced three Hamas activists to a five-year suspended sentence for planning to kill Israeli citizens, the first part of which they were to spend in prison (two were sentenced to 30 months in prison while the third was sentenced to 24 months in prison). (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 May)

2. Israelis

168. On 8 January, Tatiana Susskin was sentenced by the Jerusalem District Court to two years of imprisonment plus a one-year suspended sentence for posting caricatures in Hebron on 27 June 1997 of the Prophet Mohammed depicted as a pig writing in a book entitled "The Qur'an". Susskin is a member of the extreme right-wing Kach movement. The 26-year-old woman was convicted of committing a racist act, supporting a terrorist organization, attempting to give religious offence and of attempted vandalism. She was also convicted of endangering life by throwing stones at Arab drivers on 28 June. Stating that Susskin was guilty of a "revolting and degenerate act which offended the feelings of Moslems in Israel and the entire world", the judge explained that he had taken into consideration the fact that she was "not in complete mental health" when deciding her sentence, which could otherwise have amounted to up to 26 years in prison. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 9 January; also referred to in *The Jerusalem Times*, 16 January)

169. On 6 February, it was reported that the Hebron Brigade Commander, Colonel Yigal Sharon, had sentenced two soldiers to a week in prison for "unbecoming behaviour". The soldiers reportedly defiled a Palestinian rooftop they were guarding and had argued with an Arab family about it. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 February)

170. On 1 March, the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court sentenced two Jewish extreme right-wing activists, aged 16 and 20, to 15 months in prison plus a five-month suspended sentence for burning a Palestinian-owned car in Jerusalem in the aftermath of a suicide bombing attack in the city six months earlier. The judge reportedly agreed to defer the execution of the sentence in order to enable the two to appeal to the High Court of Justice against the severity of the sentence. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 March)

171. On 12 March, two paratroopers who shot and killed three Palestinian workers at the Tarkumiya roadblock on 10 March were released from detention on the orders of OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan. Dayan claimed that the driver of the van carrying the Palestinians had driven in a dangerous and suspicious way, which had caused the soldiers to believe that their commanding officer had been struck. He stressed, however, that the incident had not been an attempted "terrorist" attack. He stated that the paratroopers had been arrested because of the tragic outcome but, as the investigation had unfolded, it became clear that there was no justification for keeping them in detention. He also observed that, during the two years of his present command, not one soldier had stood trial related to incidents that took place during operational activities. The Palestinian Authority charged that the Tarkumiya incident was a heinous crime. Palestinian Authority Minister of Information and Cultural Affairs, Yasser Abed Rabbo, stated that the Palestinians did not accept Israel's investigation of the affair and demanded that the paratroopers be tried. "We demand that a neutral investigation be set up and that the soldiers responsible be punished", Mr. Rabbo stated, warning that failure by Israel to bring the soldiers to trial would be interpreted as encouraging soldiers to continue perpetrating such crimes against the Palestinian people. Finally, he stated that he did not know of any Israeli who remained in prison for killing a Palestinian. The Palestinian demand that the soldiers be tried was widely condemned by Israeli officials. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's communications adviser, David Bar Illan, stated that the soldiers had "acted in accordance with regulations" and accused the Palestinian Authority of legitimizing the resort to violence as a policy instrument. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 March; *Jerusalem Post*, 13, 15 and 17 March)

172. On 15 March, the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police issued arrest warrants against settlers who had rioted in the Abu Sneinah neighbourhood in Hebron. The arrests were not made on the Sabbath out of consideration for the settlers. On 17 March, police stated that only 5 or 6 of the 25 settlers to whom summons had been issued regarding alleged rioting in Hebron on 13 March had turned up for questioning. They had been released on bail after they had signed a commitment to refrain from entering the Palestinian Authority-controlled area of the town. Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police spokesman Opher Silvan stated that the police would seek arrest warrants for those who had failed to report for questioning. On 18 March, however, police in Hebron stated that they would hold off sending arrest warrants to settlers who had ignored the summons. Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police spokesman Opher Silvan explained that the decision had come after two additional settlers had turned up at the police station. He added that since things had calmed down in the town, the police preferred to delay applying for warrants. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 March; *Jerusalem Post*, 16 and 19 March; *Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 18 March)

173. On 20 April, the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court gave a resident of the Dolev settlement the benefit of the doubt and acquitted him on charges of injuring by gunshots a 17-year-old Palestinian youth after his car had been stoned in Harbata village. The justice ruled that the link between the shots fired by the settler on that day and the injury of the youth and its timing was not sufficiently evident. (*Ha'aretz*, 21 April)

174. On 27 April, three border policemen who had kidnapped and abused two Palestinian men six months earlier were sentenced to prison terms ranging from one year to one-and-a-half years plus a one-year suspended sentence. The three were convicted of causing injury, kidnapping, threatening, abusing their authority and destroying evidence. The policemen reportedly ordered two Palestinians from Safafa village to come into their jeep and drove them to the Begin Forest (south of Jerusalem) where they struck them all over the body with planks of wood and stones, leaving them with serious injuries. After releasing one of them, they tied the leg of the other to their jeep and dragged him for dozens of metres. The justice stated in his ruling that he had been positively impressed by the personality of each of the policemen and the sincerity of their regrets. He also responded positively to a request by the defence to defer the execution of the sentence for 20 days in order to enable the policemen to appeal to the High Court of Justice. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 April)

175. On 21 May, Military prosecutors announced that the IDF paratroopers who had shot dead three Palestinian workers and wounded two others at the Tarkumiya roadblock on 10 March would not be court-martialled. Their decision came after Central Command prosecutors reviewed the case and found that the soldiers had responded properly, given that they felt that their lives were in imminent danger. The incident reportedly occurred when a squad of IDF paratroopers manning the Tarkumiya roadblock riddled a van carrying Palestinian labourers with bullets after it had jerked forward at high speed, overtaken a line of cars and appeared about to run down an IDF sergeant. Initially, OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan ordered the arrest of the paratroopers, a move heavily criticized by many officers and soldiers. However, they were released a day later. The killings sparked days of heavy rioting in the territories, during which at least two Palestinians were killed. Dr. Ahmed Tibi, a senior aide to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, stated that the decision not to try the soldiers "affirms what we had said in the past: that Palestinian blood is cheap. The message being sent by the Israeli Government to its soldiers in the field is that you can kill Palestinians with impunity". (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 22 May)

176. On 29 May, it was reported that Israeli courts had acquitted the soldiers responsible for the killings at the Tarkumiya checkpoint in March. The killings took place when Israeli soldiers opened fire on a van carrying passengers returning from their workplace in Israel to the town of Dura. Three were killed and five others were injured. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 29 May)

C. Treatment of civilians

1. General developments

(a) Harassment and physical ill-treatment

177. On 22 January, the Attorney of the Jerusalem District filed a charge sheet against three border policemen who had allegedly abused two Palestinians from the El Khader village on 12 August 1997. The three were charged with a series of abuses against the Palestinians, including serious injuries under aggravating circumstances, kidnapping, threats, abuse of power and the destruction of evidence. According to the charge sheet, the three defendants came across the Palestinians while patrolling Beit Safafa. After checking their identification cards, they ordered them to get into their jeep and lower their heads in order to prevent them from seeing where they were being taken. At a certain point, they pulled up at an isolated spot and ordered one of the Palestinians to get off, after which they beat him with wooden planks and stones, injuring him in the head and face and causing a haemorrhage in the eyelids, as well as internal bleeding. They then ordered the other Palestinian to get out of the jeep, after which they started to beat him as well. As a result of the beatings, he fell to the ground. One of the policemen then drew his gun and threatened to shoot him unless he stood up. When he rose to his feet, he was beaten with planks and stones. The policemen then tied him to the jeep and started to drag him along the ground. After being dragged, the Palestinian tried to escape but was caught and beaten once again. As a result of the beatings, he suffered from a haemorrhage in the eyelids, a fracture and swelling in the nose, swelling and injuries on the head, injuries on the back, and a haemorrhage and injuries on the hands and legs. The charge sheet also claimed that, following the physical abuse, the policemen burned their victims' identification cards, knowing that they could be used as evidence against them. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 January)

178. On 1 February, the head of the Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Department, lawyer Eran Shendar,

stated that some 100 cases involving mainly violence by border police against Palestinians occurred every year. The incidents principally involved border policemen on compulsory service who beat Palestinians caught in Israel without a permit. A large number of Palestinians who had been beaten did not file complaints and even when they did, there was an objective difficulty in identifying the policemen involved in the incidents since the complainants only provided a general description. Mr. Shendar added, however, that all complaints about police violence were thoroughly investigated. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 February)

179. On 3 February, it was reported that a 38-year-old Palestinian woman from Hebron had recently filed four complaints with the Hebron police. Two complaints concerned sexual harassment by IDF soldiers, while two concerned damage and disturbances caused by soldiers who stood guard at an outpost set up on her rooftop. The woman and her husband complained that the setting up of an observation post on their roof had caused a serious deterioration in the quality of their lives. The couple complained that, over the past month, soldiers had taken to eliminating their body waste at one of the corners of the roof and that their urine came down the drainpipe straight to the balcony near their kitchen. In addition, the soldiers sometimes threw leftovers of food into their inner court yard. According to eyewitnesses, soldiers also washed their hands in the family's water tanks, thus preventing them from using the water. Furthermore, because of the noise they were making and their harassment, the couple were prevented from sleeping in their bedroom which is located below the observation post. The woman also complained that she was sexually harassed by the soldiers on two occasions, one of which was when her husband was away visiting relatives on the occasion of Ramadan. The woman also stated that the soldiers kept knocking on her door and verbally abusing her, including calling her a whore. She also indicated that, on one occasion, soldiers stoned her 10-year-old son who is mentally ill after she had ignored their curses and their calls for her to come out. When she heard her child crying and shouting, she came out and was hit in the shoulder with a stone. The woman stated that she felt threatened in her own house and that the soldiers violated her privacy. She also claimed that she was harassed by settlers who verbally abused her and threw stones at her house. In responding to the charges, the IDF spokesman stated that "in the light of the security situation in Hebron and as a result of incidents involving the throwing of stones at houses located in the Avraham Avinu compound, IDF had set up a number of new outposts, including one on the house of the complainant. IDF soldiers and officers avoid any kind of confrontation with the local population and see to it that the population is treated properly. Nevertheless, the complaints would be examined by IDF and the police". (*Ha'aretz*, 3 and 6 February)

180. On 5 February, OC Central Command, Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan, ordered soldiers and border policemen serving in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) to treat Palestinians with more respect and resort to less violence. The orders followed a recent increase in complaints by West Bank residents about their treatment at the hands of IDF. Many complaints reportedly came from Palestinians claiming mistreatment at roadblocks set up during the past month amid warnings of planned "terrorist" attacks. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 6 February)

181. On 6 February, it was reported that OC Border Police, Yitzhak Dadon, had ordered the removal from service with border police of two newly recruited border policemen suspected of abusing Arab minors. The policemen, who confessed to beating Arab youths and leaving them in a forest south of Jerusalem, were sent back to an IDF induction centre. On the other hand, the Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Unit decided not to take administrative measures against six other border policemen who had been involved in the incident. The accusations against the six, who were in a vehicle in which the Arab youths were beaten, concerned non-interference and failure to report the incident to their superiors. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 February)

182. On 6 February, three Palestinian widows from Hebron on whose rooftop IDF had set up an observation post complained of harassment by IDF soldiers. The women stated that since the setting up of the post, they had been living in fear, with their doors locked day and night. They stated that on rainy days, their staircase was filled with soldiers who would not clear the way to allow them to enter or leave their homes. Guests coming to visit them were subjected to thorough checks and their gifts opened. On one occasion, a gift plastic gun for one of the children was confiscated. The women also complained of garbage being thrown and the contamination of their drinking water with urine, coffee and leftovers. One widow expressed fear that soldiers would take revenge on her sons. Another widow, a mother of five, stated that she did not dare climb to the roof without her eldest 11-year-old son. She stated that one day when her water tank was leaking, she decided to go up to the roof but as soon as she turned on the staircase lights a soldier charged towards her with a gun. On another occasion, a soldier asked her: "How can the three of you manage without husbands?". The women stated that she was living in constant fear of being attacked by the soldiers in an indecent manner. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 February)

(b) Collective punishment

(i) Houses or rooms that were demolished or sealed

183. On 4 January, IDF is reported to have sealed off for one month Palestinian houses surrounding the Avraham Avinu Jewish enclave as a warning against continued attacks against Jewish settlers in Hebron. (*Ha'aretz*, 4 January)

184. On 27 January, the police evicted from Jerusalem City Hall several dozens of "Gush Shalom" and other left-wing activists who demonstrated against the demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem. The protesters, who were described by Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert as "urchins", claimed that the Municipality was demolishing Arab houses arbitrarily, out of political considerations and according to demographic calculations. In addition, activists of the Israeli Committee Against Demolitions claimed that owing to the impossibility of Arabs building legally and in the light of the increase in the Arab population, many had no other choice but to build without a permit. They also charged that the demolitions were motivated by political considerations rather than urban planning. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 January)

185. On 4 February, Internal Security Minister, Avigdor Kahalani, stated that the peace process had often prevented the Israeli authorities from dealing with what he described as a phenomenon of illegal Palestinian construction in East Jerusalem. He stated that Palestinians had recently built many houses in East Jerusalem in an attempt to create facts on the ground. He indicated, however, that a recently created house demolition unit was patrolling the city to locate houses in the first stages of construction. This would enable the authorities to deal with the phenomenon through a short procedure rather than through the courts, thereby preventing the continuation of the construction. (*Ha'aretz*, 5 February)

186. On 7 February, Palestinian police scuffled with IDF after soldiers demolished several "illegal" Palestinian buildings. The IDF spokesman explained that the demolitions had been carried out after the Palestinians had ignored Israel's order to halt the construction. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 February)

187. On 3 March, the Civil Administration demolished three Palestinian homes in the Hebron area on the grounds that they had been built "illegally". In an attempt to prevent the demolition of one of the houses, a mother locked herself up in the house with her two children and threatened to blow up herself and her children with a gas canister. Soldiers, however, smashed the windows and forcibly dragged the woman out. The woman stated that, during the confrontation, one of the soldiers had seized her three-year-old son and threatened to shoot both of them. Afterwards, she was overpowered by a large number of soldiers who took her out of the house. She stated that soldiers had grabbed her by the hair and dragged her some 200 metres. She also claimed that the soldiers had torn her clothes and thrown her into a water pit, following which a bulldozer demolished her home. The IDF spokesman stated that the woman had behaved violently towards the soldiers, threatened to stab them, turned the gas on in order to blow her house up and threatened to pour boiling water on the soldiers. He denied that the soldiers had torn the woman's clothes or thrown her into a water pit. The Civil Administration stated that her house had been built "illegally" and that all legal procedures had been exhausted prior to its demolition, including an appeal to the High Court of Justice, which was also rejected. The demolitions of the other houses were also carried out following legal procedures. (*Ha'aretz*, 4 March)

188. On 22 March, Civil Administration officials accompanied by large numbers of IDF and police forces confiscated equipment used by a Palestinian family of 12 whose house on the southern outskirts of Hebron had been demolished by the Civil Administration some three weeks earlier on the grounds that it had been built "illegally". According to eyewitness accounts, the soldiers and policemen used excessive force against the family who passively resisted the operation. Video footage taken by Reuters cameramen showed the wife being dragged away and handcuffed by soldiers. She was arrested together with her husband and two of their children. The IDF spokesman stated in response that according to initial reports, the soldiers had been stoned and attacked by the Palestinians and had to use force in order to arrest the assailants, four of whom had been detained for questioning. The family reportedly started to rebuild their home with the help of peace activists after having camped in three tents since their house was bulldozed. Civil Administration officials warned them that the home would be demolished again since they still lacked a building permit. The head of the family claimed that he had documents showing that he owned 26 dunums of land at the site. He also stated that their house was first demolished in 1988 and that he had gone into debt trying to rebuild it. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 March)

189. On 21 April, an Israeli security report charged that "illegal" Palestinian construction in areas of the West Bank under full Israeli control remained "rampant" and outpaced efforts to demolish the unlicensed structures. The government study stated that 701 buildings had been completed by Palestinians in 1997 without licences from the Civil Administration. In the first three months of 1998, an additional 74 structures had been built "illegally" by the

Palestinians in area C, with the areas around Hebron and Ramallah leading all other districts. The study continued to observe that Israel had obtained orders for the demolition of 615 of the "illegal" buildings which had been completed in 1997 and 74 demolition orders for those constructed in 1998. Of the total number of orders, 290 had been carried out. The study indicated that the Government's policy continued to be that of demolishing unlicensed Palestinian homes, adding that it was implemented according to certain priorities and weekly assessments by IDF and the Defence Ministry. (*Jerusalem Post*, 21 April)

(ii) Imposition of curfews, sealing off or closing of areas

190. On 31 December, IDF imposed a curfew on the Burkin and A-Dik villages located near the scene of the "terrorist" attack in which an Israeli woman was critically wounded. The curfew was lifted on the night of 1 January. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 2 January)

191. On 1 January, it was reported that, unlike previous years, the security authorities had decided to ease the closure of the occupied territories during Ramadan. Security officials warned, however, that should they receive warning of a planned attack, a total closure would be reimposed. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 January)

192. On 2 January, IDF declared the casbah area in Hebron a closed military zone after two bombs were thrown at the Avraham Avinu enclave in the city. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 January)

193. On 5 January, IDF imposed a curfew on Dura village, following an incident in which a Palestinian driver had opened fire at IDF vehicles near the Al-Fawwar refugee camp and subsequently fled in the direction of Dura. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 January)

194. On 13 January, the Israeli authorities sealed off several streets inside the Old City of Hebron, the casbah. The streets, which form the residential area of Hosh Shaheen, are part of Hebron's vegetable market and lie close to the Avraham Avinu settlement. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 January)

195. On 5 March, it was reported that Israelis were banned from entering Jenin, where a closure had been imposed for a week, for fear that members of the "Black Panthers" movement which operated in the town during the intifada would try to kidnap a soldier and hold him hostage in exchange for the release of a member of the movement who had been arrested a week earlier by undercover soldiers in area B. Merchants in Jenin claimed that their livelihood had been severely affected as a result of the closure since thousands of Israelis, most of whom were Arabs from the Galilee, used to visit the town every week. (*Ha'aretz*, 5 March)

196. On 28 April, IDF imposed a closure on the occupied territories. Palestinians from the West Bank were barred from entering Israel during the Independence Day celebrations until 2 May. Exceptions were made for a few hundred medical personnel, lawyers and humanitarian cases. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 28 April; *Ha'aretz*, 29 April)

197. On 16 May, IDF revoked an order declaring Kalkilia, Tulkarm and Jenin off-limits for Israelis. The decision was made at the request of the Palestinians who relied on trade with Israeli citizens (mostly Arabs) who visit the three towns located near the Green Line on Saturdays. Other West Bank cities continued to remain off-limits to Israelis. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 May)

(iii) Other forms of collective punishment

198. On 4 January, OC Central Command, Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan, and OC IDF troops in the West Bank, Brig.-Gen. Itzhak Eitan, toured Hebron and decided to impose further restrictions on Palestinian construction and movement in the casbah area which is under IDF control. They also announced the sealing off of houses located in the vicinity of the Avraham Avinu enclave, the establishment of further military outposts in the casbah and the installation of special gates to seal off the area in the event of violent outbreaks. They also declared that plans to reopen part of Shuhada Street to Palestinians would be postponed. Finally, Maj.-Gen. Dayan warned that Palestinian harassment of Hebron settlers would negatively affect the normalization of Palestinian life in the city. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 5 January)

199. On 8 January, Palestinians refurbishing buildings located near the Jewish Avraham Avinu quarter in Hebron were ordered by IDF to stop their work. The order was one of several restrictions imposed on residents by IDF in response to an increase in violence in the town, including shooting at soldiers and the throwing of two explosive devices into a Jewish playground the previous week. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 January)

200. On 23 February, OC Central Command, Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan, ordered the closure of Palestinian stores on Shalalah Street in Hebron in response to an incident in which three explosive devices were thrown at IDF troops on 22 February. In addition to the closure of the store, Dayan imposed restrictions on traffic between the Israeli-controlled and the

Palestinian-controlled sectors of the town. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 24 February)

201. On 31 March, IDF and Civil Administration officials closed a Palestinian school in Tekoa village on the outskirts of Bethlehem after their requests that the stoning of IDF troops and Israeli vehicles in the area be stopped were ignored. (*Jerusalem Post*, 1 April)

202. On 17 May, up to nine Palestinians were injured by rubber bullets fired by IDF during clashes in Hebron. The clashes, between soldiers and Palestinian youths, began after soldiers had forced merchants to close down dozens of shops in the city centre as punishment for riots which had erupted there the previous day. Merchants who ignored the order were arrested. During the clash, which led to the closure of the shops, Palestinians threw fire-bombs and stones at IDF positions and troops, who responded with rubber bullets and tear-gas. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 18 May)

(c) Expulsions

203. On 4 January, Israel expelled 15 families of the Turkman Bedouin tribe from their encampments in the Jordan Valley on the grounds that the land had been marked for confiscation. According to sources, the expulsion of the Turkman is part of a campaign Israel has mounted against the Bedouins of the Jordan Valley, on the grounds that their land is either a closed military area or is government land and therefore State property. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 January)

(d) Economic and social situation

204. On 13 January, it was reported that Arab women from East Jerusalem who gave birth in Israel would henceforth automatically receive hospitalization and birth grants if they and their husbands were residents of Israel. The National Insurance Institute announced the change of policy after three human rights organizations had petitioned the High Court of Justice over the issue. (*Jerusalem Post*, 13 January)

205. On 13 January, the Israeli army closed several streets in the Hosh Shaheen area of Hebron, ignoring the entrances and exits leading to eight Palestinian houses. Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe said the decision to close down the area would affect the completion of restoration work on 22 houses in the area of the vegetable market. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 January)

206. On 15 January, it was reported that according to Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe, the living conditions of Palestinians residing in areas in Hebron under Israeli control had deteriorated further since the signing of the Hebron Accords. Mr. Natshe charged that Palestinians living in the area were constantly harassed by IDF. In addition, he accused Israel of not implementing the Hebron Agreement, citing as an example Shuhada Street which continued to remain closed to Palestinian traffic. "With each day that passes, we become less optimistic", he continued, adding that the Israeli presence in the area had only served to damage the town's economy. Palestinian Legislative Council member Mohammed Hurani, a resident of Hebron and Fatah member, expressed a similar view, stating that as long as settlers remained in Hebron, there was no hope for peace. Palestinians also claimed that Israel continued to confiscate their land and seal off Palestinian homes located in the vicinity of the Jewish enclave. In answering the charges, Israeli officials stated that recent IDF orders demanding the closure of homes located near the Jewish quarter had been issued in response to the throwing of two explosive devices into a children's playground in the Avraham Avinu quarter. (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 January)

207. On 6 February, it was reported that since the division of Hebron, Palestinian residents of the Old City had been feeling that their fate had been sealed, expressing their conviction that Israel would never leave the town and that the Oslo Accords were dead. The restored Shuhada Street, now known as King David Street, had not been opened to Palestinians as agreed in the Hebron Agreements owing to "an increase of violence and threats, mainly against Jewish lives", as claimed by IDF. Scores of stores, the facades of which had been freshly painted, were closed. The wholesale vegetable market had not been opened either, also in breach of the agreement. Old slogans, such as "Death to Arabs", had reappeared and were added on whitewashed walls and new, more vulgar ones had been added. Arrests for identification checks and delays of people for hours — sometimes with beatings and abuse — occurred almost every night, according to the owner of a shop in front of the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque). His brother complained that during a routine check of his papers, soldiers had forced him through beatings to enter an open grave in a Palestinian cemetery. According to other Palestinians, passers-by in the old marketplace area were often thrown into stairwells and tunnels and subjected to lengthy harassment by both soldiers and settlers, often in a spontaneous and uncontrolled manner. One municipality worker stated that everything possible was being done to force Palestinians out of the H-2 area. He also stated that bulldozers working on the expansion of the Avraham Avinu settlement were causing his house walls to shake. He lived in constant fear that, despite a Civil Administration intervention in his favour, settlers would carry out their plan of demolishing two adjacent walls which

would cause his house to collapse. The man also claimed that under the abandoned section of the house, settlers had excavated some tunnels through which they intended to gain control of the whole area. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 February)

208. According to Rafael Cohen, the Director of Registration in the Ministry of the Interior, a total of 606 Palestinians had lost their right to permanent residency in Jerusalem in 1997. Cohen was responding to a question submitted by the Alternative Information Center. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 13 February)

209. On 22 February, Palestinian Authority negotiator Sa'eb Erekat stated that the pro-Iraqi demonstrations in the territories were nothing in comparison with what could still happen because of the severe hardships to which Palestinians were subjected. He gave examples of the educational system in Gaza where schools had to operate in two or three shifts for lack of facilities. Despite the high population density in Gaza, Mr. Erekat complained that the Israeli Government was confiscating dozens of dunums of land from Khan Younis for the Neve Dekalim settlement. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat charged that Israel's closure policy caused the Palestinians daily losses of millions of dollars. Unemployment in Gaza was 61 per cent and amounted to 46 per cent in the West Bank. A box of tomatoes cost NIS 3 in Gaza because of the export ban while the same box sold for NIS 35 in the West Bank. Flower and strawberry export deals could not be honoured because of Israeli restrictions. Arab farmers in Gaza used flowers intended for export as food for livestock, while bananas from the West Bank could not reach Gaza. Mr. Arafat, who spoke with considerable bitterness, also accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of creating fertile ground for fundamentalism. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 February)

210. On 27 February, it was reported that the Jerusalem Municipality and the police were bracing for the eviction of homeless Palestinians from an encampment in the Sawana neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. The encampment, housing some 45 families, had been set up in August 1997 by homeless Palestinians whose Jerusalem identification cards risked being invalidated by the Interior Ministry. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 February)

211. Palestinian-Israeli multilateral negotiations over water were stalled in a deadlock. Whereas the Palestinian side insisted on water rights for the Palestinians, Israel claimed that the Palestinians will get no more than a share of the water. The Palestinians get 250 million cubic metres of water every year, while Israelis consume 2,000 million cubic metres a year. This means that every Israeli enjoys a share five times greater than his Palestinian counterpart.

212. About 90 per cent of Israeli products which are marketed in the Palestinian areas are substandard, according to Mahmoud Abu Samra, a Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Agriculture official. Abu Samra said the Israeli authorities had not allowed a Palestinian businessman to enter Israel because he refused to market poor quality powdered milk in Gaza. He called upon Palestinians to boycott Israeli products. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 27 February)

213. On 17 March, it was reported that approximately 500,000 Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (one fifth of the population) lived below the poverty line, mainly owing to the deteriorating situation of the labour market. This and other economic data concerning the deterioration of the territories' economy since 1993 were included in a report released by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Trade and Economy to back its claim that Israel did not honour the relevant articles of the Oslo Accords and of the Paris Protocol. The poverty line was set at an annual income of $650 per head. The report estimated that the number of families living below the poverty line was greater in reality, stating that the level of poverty was directly linked to the unstable job market and the closures. Aside from the data compiled by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, the report was based on joint findings by the World Bank and the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Centre, as well as on socio-economic research by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 March)

214. At a meeting sponsored by the Water Research Centre of El-Azhar University and the United Nations Development Programme on 22 March marking International Water Day, experts concluded that Israel was stealing Palestinian water for its own irrigation and reservoirs. They demanded that Israel compensate the Palestinians for "water theft" over 25 years. According to hydrologists, the cost of Palestinian water that Israel had used over 25 years amounted to $25 billion. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 27 March)

215. On 27 March, it was reported that a total of 2,500 Palestinians lost their Jerusalem identity cards in 1996, according to a report published by the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre. Israel reportedly claims that only 638 identity cards were withdrawn. The report also took up the case of 10,000 children under the age of 16 whom the Israeli Ministry of the Interior had refused to register because the residency rights of their parents were in doubt. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 27 March)

216. On 24 April, it was reported that Israeli soldiers had prevented workers from the Palestinian Authority's Energy Authority from drilling near the Morag settlement earlier in

the week, on the pretext that the area was under total Israeli control. The Energy Authority was trying to link a power transformer in Rafah with the Khan Younis voltage power station. In a separate development, it was reported that the Israeli authorities had recently diverted one third of the water intended for Bethlehem to the settlements around the town. Israel claimed that with the heat wave and the summer season, settlers needed more water. The situation caused serious water shortages in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 24 April)

217. On 1 May, it was reported that Israel had refused to allow Palestinians to operate the Arafat International Airport, located in the southern Gaza Strip. According to the Head of the Civil Aviation Authority, Brig.-Gen. Fayez Zaidan, Israel refused to let in the necessary technical equipment to make the airport operational at night. Officials denied the Israeli accusation that Palestinians did not want to sig. e protocol concerning the operation of the airport in order to put pressure on Israel to implement the redeployment of Israeli troops from the West Bank. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 1 May)

218. On 21 May, it was reported that the European Commission had published a paper outlining the legal and factual background for its recommendation not to include settler products in the trade agreements with Israel. The paper stated that, because of the obstacles placed by Israel in the way of independent Palestinian exports, in 1997 the Palestinian Authority had succeeded in directly exporting to Europe less than 1 per cent of the flower export quota set in its agreements with Europe. Between November 1997 and the end of March, it managed to export only 10 per cent of its strawberry quota. Israel, by contrast, exported to Europe 100 per cent of its flower quota and 57.8 per cent of its strawberry quota. In addition to the European legal stance that all the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 could not be included in preferential trade arrangements with Europe, the paper stressed the Commission's annoyance at the restrictions imposed by Israel on Palestinian trade. According to the Commission, those restrictions constituted a violation of the interim trade agreement signed between Israel and the European Union (EU), on the one hand, and the interim economic agreement concluded between the Palestinian Authority and EU on the other. As a result of the restrictions, Palestinians were obliged to import and export through Israeli middlemen, which undermined possible Palestinian economic development and negatively affected Palestinian revenues. The paper described the restrictions as Draconian. The paper went on to observe that the Israeli exporter demanded fees for his services, thereby reducing the Palestinian subcontractor's revenue. It pointed out that the Israeli port and airport authorities required all Palestinian importers to sign commitments whereby imported products from EU would not be sold in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. A similar commitment was not required of Israeli importers. The document stated that Palestinian importers were often denied import permits or that those permits were held up by the Israeli authorities. The manufacturer whose permit was held up was compelled to import without a permit and pay a penalty of 5 per cent. According to the document, Israel justified the denial of permits on the grounds that the products did not meet the required standards, even if the same products were imported in Israel by an Israeli agent without any difficulty. In other cases, the standards required were not mentioned in Israeli import rules. Often, the importation of those products was permitted when their Israeli importer had failed to meet the demand. The paper concluded that "it may be assumed that these practices exist in order to protect Israeli agents or manufacturers". (*Ha'aretz*, 21 May)

219. On 22 May, it was reported that EU accusations about Israel labelling exports manufactured beyond the Green Line as "Made in Israel" and the harassment of Palestinian exporters had caused a furore in Israel, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatening to make it harder for Palestinians to work in Israel. An EU diplomatic source noted that the objections made regarding settler products being exported to EU and the harassment of Palestinian exporters were first raised in July 1997 in a letter addressed by the head of the EU Department for Relations with Israel and the Mediterranean Region, Miguel Marin, to the then-Foreign Minister David Levy, but that nothing had been done about it. The source explained that EU was emphasizing the Palestinian exporters' difficulties and not the problem of settler products because EU, as the Palestinian Authority's largest foreign donor, was fed up watching the Palestinian economy go from bad to worse during the peace process. The sources stated that Palestinian exporters who wanted to stamp their products "Made in Palestine" and export them duty-free to Europe faced numerous administrative procedures which made their life very difficult. "Often Palestinian exporters come to the conclusion that it's easier to sell their products to Israel's agricultural marketing agency Agrexco, which in turn stamps them 'Made in Israel' and sends them on to Europe", the source stated. Sa'id Sha'ath, the official in charge of international relations for the Palestinian Authority Chamber of Commerce, stated that the main problems for Palestinian exporters were at the Erez checkpoint and Ashdod port where Israeli officials typically held up their goods for lengthy security inspections: "We sell 80 million flowers a

year, for example. Flowers have to be exported within 24 hours of being picked, but sometimes they're being held up for 48 hours, by which time they're ready to be thrown away", Mr. Sha'ath explained, adding that "Israeli officials always say it's security, security, as if there's a bomb in the flowers". Asked if Israeli officials were not justified in checking Palestinian trucks for explosive devices, Mr. Sha'ath insisted that there was no justification for the inspections taking so long. He stated further that Palestinian flower growers could sell their flowers directly to Europe for 80 cents each, but because of the difficulties, preferred to sell their crops to the Israel Flower Council at 10 cents each. "The Council then stamps the consignments 'Grown in Israel', flies them to Europe and sells them for the full 80-cent price. The Palestinian exporter hardly makes any profit this way but it's better than marking his crop 'Made in Palestine' and letting it go completely to waste in trucks kept standing for days", he explained. Asked why he thought Israel was making life so hard for Palestinian exporters, Mr. Sha'ath replied: "They want us to remain dependant on them, they don't want us to develop an independent economy". The Israeli Agricultural Ministry's Director-General, Zvi Alon, was reportedly infuriated by the charges, which he dismissed as "total, absolute rubbish", adding that this was what Palestinian politicians said because it was not easy for them to admit that they did not have the ability to export on their own. He stated further that the Flower Council did not discriminate between Palestinian and Israeli growers, who were paid the same commission and got the same monetary return when the flowers were sold in Europe. Regarding the charges of lengthy security checks and harassment, Mr. Alon stated: "I don't know anything about security checks, but security is security. Beyond that, what reason do we have to harass them? Believe me, we're not worried about competition from Palestinians. We're going above and beyond the call of duty for them". (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 May)

(e) Situation of children

220. On 2 January, Civil Administration inspectors accompanied by border police tore down and seized two tents which were serving as a school for Bedouin children of the Jahalin tribe living in the vicinity of the Kedar settlement, on the grounds that they were in a "fire practice area". The equipment found in the tents, including tables, chairs and a blackboard, was also confiscated. This was the second time that the Civil Administration had destroyed the Bedouin school. Two months earlier, it had demolished a school made by the Bedouin from tin plate for children aged 6 to 10, again on the grounds that it was located in a "dangerous fire practice area". Curled up with their shabby coats that failed to protect them from the cold, the desert wind blowing against their faces, some with their teeth chattering, others with lips turned blue, the Bedouin children were now studying in the freezing open air whenever it did not rain. Above their heads is Kedar settlement, composed of villas built decades after the Jahalin tribe came to the area after being expelled from the Negev in 1948. (*Ha'aretz*, 4 and 30 January)

221. On 25 January, it was reported that Israel has been referring for adoption abroad Arab orphan children, both Christian and Muslim, after a change in religion and identity. The report, which was published in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, said the children had for years been shipped off to Europe by the Ministry of Social Affairs where they were then placed by companies specializing in adoption procedures. The Ministry issued a statement on 26 January admitting some truth in the report, noting that the Ministry was seeking a proper home for the children. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 30 January)

222. On 11 February, some seven border policemen reportedly abused three Palestinian peddlers aged 12, 13 and 15. The incident began when a border police vehicle suddenly emerged at a junction in Jerusalem where the three boys were selling their wares to drivers. The policemen came out of the vehicle and ordered the boys to enter it; one boy who tried to escape was chased and captured. In the meantime, one border policeman started to beat the 15-year-old boy on the neck with his rifle butt and to verbally abuse him. The boys were then ordered to lie on the floor of the vehicle and were subjected to a series of beatings and humiliations. During a 40-minute drive from the Katamon neighbourhood to the Arnon Hanatziv settlement, the policemen kicked the boys, stepped on them, slapped them and beat them up. Any one who dared raise their head received blows. The children were also forced to sing a song in praise of border police and were laughed at. They were brought to the Arnon Hanatziv promenade and the two younger boys were ordered to leave. The 15-year-old boy was taken to a nearby sidewalk where he was subjected to additional beatings and kicking, allegedly by two border policemen. After two minutes of beating, the boy was hit on the head with the butt of a gun and fell unconscious to the ground. When he regained consciousness, he saw policemen and an ambulance which transferred him to hospital; there was no trace of his assailants. Later in the evening, a police patrol took him from the hospital. The police left the injured boy, a resident of Yatta village, near the Bethlehem roadblock and drove away. Having no money to pay for a taxi, the boy entered a parked vehicle and fell asleep, overcome by pain and fatigue. At 3 a.m., the owner of the

vehicle arrived and, realizing the boy's condition, took him to his village. The persons who committed the abuses were identified rapidly. The Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Department recommended placing two of the persons concerned on trial, on charges of aggravated assault. They were not arrested, however. Border police sources stated that they were worried by the leniency of the punishment inflicted in such cases which a senior officer described as "ridiculous". (*Ha'aretz*, 27 February)

223. On 13 March, it was reported that a 13-year-old boy who had been injured by IDF gunfire in Hebron on 11 March was hospitalized in critical condition. Doctors at the Al Ahli Hospital stated that the boy was in a state of cerebral death and was being kept alive only by life support equipment. Dr. Mazan Arafai told a reporter of the French News Agency that there was no chance of saving the child after he was hit in the head by a rubber bullet. The boy died of his wounds on 17 March (see list). (*Ha'aretz*, 13 and 18 March)

(f) Other developments

224. On 20 January, the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza submitted to the Defence Ministry data and aerial photographs allegedly proving that the Palestinians had "illegally" paved 35 roads in area C, which is under full Israeli security control. (*Ha'aretz*, 20 January)

225. On 20 January, a report published by the Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Civilian Affairs revealed that Israel had been dumping huge amounts of solid and liquid waste into the Palestinian territories, destroying flora and fauna, and polluting the water resources of Palestinian cities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A day after the publication of the report, the Israeli army attempted to rechannel the main waste-water system in the direction of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip. An army spokesman said the move was in response to the continuous attempts by the Khan Younis Municipality to send the waste water in the direction of the settlements of Gad and Neve Dekalim. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 January)

226. On 4 February, the Foreign Ministry released a report on relations with the Palestinian Authority, according to which between 80,000 and 100,000 Palestinians were working in Israel, of whom between 20,000 and 40,000 were illegal workers from the West Bank. Stating that it was in Israel's political and security interest to advance the Palestinian economy and enhance the well-being of the Palestinian population, the report indicated that actions were being taken to allow more Palestinians to work in Israel. Other steps included allowing 5,000 Palestinian labourers to remain in Israel overnight, and allowing 3,000 Palestinian workers who met the security criteria to enter even during closures. The report also stated that goods were allowed to flow freely between Israel and the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority and that no restrictions were placed on the number of trucks allowed to cross. It was also stated that Israel allowed 7,500 Palestinian businessmen from Judea and Samaria (West Bank) and 4,500 from Gaza to cross the Green Line. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 February)

227. On 18 February, it was reported that according to a recent poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre, 77 per cent of Palestinians would support an Iraqi strike against Israel if the United States of America attacked Iraq. The survey polled 1,188 Palestinians from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. (*Jerusalem Post*, 18 February)

228. On 8 March, Defence Ministry sources dismissed Palestinian claims that they had uncovered a clandestine arms factory in the Gaza Strip. The sources stated that the Palestinian Authority had not informed them of the discovery of any weapons depot and they accused the Palestinians of manipulating the media with baseless and exaggerated reports. Their statements followed a report by Israeli radio quoting Palestinian security sources as claiming that the Palestinian police in Gaza had uncovered a large factory, capable of assembling automatic weapons, which was linked to the shipment of arms confiscated by IDF troops in the previous week near the Dead Sea. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 March)

229. On 10 March, it was reported that the grave of Baruch Goldstein, the man who murdered 29 Muslim worshippers in the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) in Hebron, would remain in its controversial location in the Kiryat Arba settlement for the time being, despite a heated debate on the subject in the Knesset Interior Committee. The Committee was reportedly discussing two versions of a bill tabled by Meretz MK Ran Cohen. One whereby the grave would be moved to a cemetery and one demanding that all signs of a memorial be removed from the grave site. Mr. Cohen told the Committee that unless the grave itself were removed, the memorial which had sprung up around it would continue to develop. He also indicated that he had received threats since proposing the legislation against the memorial grave. The Kiryat Arba Local Council rejected the proposal to transfer Goldstein's remains to another site while the "Peace Now" movement vowed to continue fighting to have the grave removed to another location. (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 March)

230. On 11 March, the Knesset extended emergency regulations allowing the punishment of employers for

allowing workers from the territories to spend the night in Israel without permits. (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 March)

2. Measures affecting certain fundamental freedoms

(a) Freedom of movement

231. On 1 January, Israel notified the Palestinian Authority of its decision to increase the quota of family visits from Gaza to the West Bank and vice versa during the month of Ramadan. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 January)

232. On 4 January, the Palestinian residents of Hebron reported that, as part of the measures taken against them by IDF, soldiers now required minors to produce their birth certificates before allowing them to use Shuhada Street. (*Ha'aretz*, 4 January)

233. On 4 January, it was reported that only Palestinian trucks equipped with a localization and tracing system would be authorized to move freely in Israel as of April. The electronic identification devices would permit the monitoring of their exact location. (*Ha'aretz*, 4 January)

234. On 3 March, Israeli and Palestinian efforts to work out a "safe passage" arrangement between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank stalled owing to a major point of disagreement between the two sides. The main argument was over the supervision of travellers from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank. The Palestinians wanted passage to be free, while Israel insisted on strict controls over crossing points and routes. The deadlock prompted Palestinian Authority negotiator Sa'eb Erekat to accuse Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of destroying the peace process by refusing to implement agreements signed with the Palestinians. (*Jerusalem Post*, 4 March)

235. On 19 March, the Defence Ministry lowered the minimum age of married Palestinian men eligible for work permits from 25 to 23, a move expected to increase the number of labourers from the territories by some 10,000 from the current 50,000. The number of entry permits granted to Palestinian merchants was also increased by 1,500, bringing their number to 13,500. The spokesman for the Coordinator of the Government's Activities in the Territories, Shlomo Dror, indicated that some 17 per cent of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank who worked in Israel accounted for over 40 per cent of earned income in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20 March)

236. On 24 April, it was reported that border guards used a new tactic to force Palestinians from land designated for confiscation. The tactic seeks to trap farmers on their own land by limiting their movement as individuals. For instance, instead of sending in the army, the authorities issue an order preventing the families from leaving the area altogether. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 24 April)

237. On 24 December, 17 Palestinians from Bethlehem were injured by IDF gunfire, including one Palestinian who was injured in the head. Palestinian eyewitnesses indicated that the clashes began when Israeli soldiers prevented some Palestinian labourers from crossing the Gilo checkpoint in order to enter Jerusalem. The eyewitnesses stated that Israeli soldiers ordered the labourers to return to Bethlehem and fired rubber bullets at them when they refused. IDF sources stated that the Palestinians had been notified that they could not enter the city because of Jerusalem Day. When they tried to push their way through the checkpoint, the soldiers responded with force. The Palestinians then hurled rocks and bottles at the soldiers, who responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets. (*Jerusalem Post*, 25 May)

(b) Freedom of education

238. On 1 January, the security authorities reportedly decided to grant entry permits to 1,100 students from Gaza to study in the West Bank. Some 1,000 students from the Gaza Strip were thought to be staying in the West Bank without a permit. Their stay there had been decreed illegal and some had reportedly been banned from visiting their families in Gaza during the holidays for two years. Those denied access to the West Bank for security reasons would have to return to Gaza, while the others would receive a permit to stay in the West Bank for the duration of their studies and to return to Gaza during the holidays. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 January)

239. On 8 March, an IDF spokesman denied reports that soldiers seeking stone-throwers at a school outside Hebron threw stun grenades and tear-gas canisters into the schoolyard after being barred from entering it. Palestinians claimed, however, that four Palestinians had to be transferred to the Aliya Hospital in Hebron, one suffered an eye injury as a result of the gassing. The school headmaster stated that the school was constantly attacked by soldiers and settlers, denying that there was any stone-throwing by the pupils. Meanwhile, Palestinian Legislative Council member Abbas Zaki declared that Israel was intimidating the pupils of the school in order to close it down. Mr. Zaki stated that there had been previous attempts by soldiers to shut the school. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 March)

(c) Freedom of religion

240. On 1 January, it was reported that as part of measures to ease the closure, the security authorities had decided to allow Muslim worshippers from Gaza and the West Bank, under the restrictions of age and security criteria, to enter the Temple Mount on Fridays during Ramadan. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 January)

241. On 2 January, on the first Friday of Ramadan, Hamed Bitawi, the Chief Imam at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, warned a crowd of 170,000 worshippers that the Al-Aqsa was in danger because of what he described as the determination of the Israeli Government and people to demolish it and build their Temple in its place. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's communications adviser, David Bar Illan, denounced Bitawi's remarks as irresponsible not only because they were "a lie from the beginning to the end" but because they could make Muslims believe that there was such an intention. Bitawi's sermon was held against the backdrop of heavy border police and police force deployment. Young men were stopped and some identity cards were confiscated until after the prayers, allegedly to prevent provocations by Muslim extremists. The police were reportedly especially cautious following the arrest two weeks earlier of two right-wing activists on suspicion of plotting to throw a pig's head onto the Temple Mount during Ramadan. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 January)

242. On 20 January, it was reported that complaints by settlers about "noises" from mosques in Palestinian villages had led to the inclusion of the issue in a list of Palestinian violations of the peace accords. Among the settlements complaining about a high level of noise emanating from mosques in nearby villages were Kdumim, Ofra and Neve Tzuf. In one case, settlers reportedly decided to take matters into their own hands. They entered one mosque and replaced a cassette of the muezzin saying prayers with the cassette of an Israeli singer. (*Ha'aretz*, 20 January)

243. On 27 and 31 March, it was reported that almost all Christians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be able to enter Jerusalem and other holy Christian sites in Israel throughout the Easter period on presentation of their identity cards alone, with the exception of those aged between 16 and 25 who would have to acquire a permit from the Civil Administration. Palestinian Christians would also be granted permits to remain in Israel with their families for up to one week during the holiday season. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 March; *Jerusalem Post*, 31 March)

244. On 14 May, fire damaged one of the wooden gates to the Temple Mount in what police stated was an arson attack. The High Muslim Council issued a statement blaming the "Israeli occupation authorities for attacking the Al-Aqsa Mosque and setting fire to one of its gates". It also called upon Muslims and Arabs to protect the Mosque from "settler gangs". The Sheikh of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Mohammed Hussein, charged during his Friday sermon that damaging the Al-Aqsa was tantamount to offending Muslims throughout the world and added that "since its beginning, the Israeli occupation has been intent on damaging the holy places of Islam and above all Al-Aqsa". The Palestinian Authority blamed Israeli extremists for what it called an act of sinful aggression, while the acting Jordanian Information Minister stated that he held Israel responsible for the arson. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 and 17 May)

245. On 21 May, it was reported that Muslim officials in Jerusalem had temporarily halted construction work underneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque at the request of Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani who charged that the work constituted a serious violation of the status quo on the Temple Mount. *Waqf* officials denied that any illegal construction was taking place under the Mount, stating that the work was part of routine repairs. Senior Muslim officials stated that while they were complying temporarily, they would resume work soon and that Israel had no right to intervene. Police officials expressed concern that any attempt to stop the work by force might incite worldwide Muslim rioting. (*Jerusalem Post*, 21 May)

246. On 24 May, several Palestinian groups distributed a leaflet, signed by the Fatah movement and Muslim clerics, urging Muslims to gather at the Al-Aqsa Mosque and to prevent the members of the Temple Mount Faithful group from praying there. The leaflet was distributed amid attempts by 40 Temple Mount Faithful activists to force their way onto the Mount. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 25 May)

247. On 28 May, Israeli settlers forced their way into the Shrine of Nabi Yousef at the eastern entrance to Nablus, despite the Palestinian Authority's refusal to allow them in. Holy to Muslims and Jews alike, the shrine was placed under Israeli control by the Oslo Accords of 1993, making it an enclave in Palestinian-controlled Nablus. Visits to the shrine require coordination by the Palestinian-Israeli Liaison Bureau. The military commander of the Nabi Yousef area, Lieutenant Saa'di Naji, said that the settlers' request was rejected because their intentions violated the arrangements reached in September 1996. The new arrangements regulating access to the shrine provide that the shrine should remain strictly a place of worship, with no additions or alterations. The settlers had requested to spend the night at the shrine, and bring their cooking utensils with them. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 June)

(d) Freedom of expression

248. On 13 March, eight Palestinian press photographers were injured in Hebron by rubber bullets fired by IDF. One photographer was moderately wounded in the head while the others were slightly wounded. The incident reportedly began when settlers started to throw stones at and beat some of the photographers who came to the Abu Sneinah neighbourhood to film clashes between the residents and settlers who had stormed the neighbourhood. During the riots, IDF soldiers started to push the settlers back towards the Avraham Avinu quarter, asking the photographers to move to the side of the settlers. They refused for fear that they would be attacked again. Tension between the army and the photographers mounted and, according to the cameraman, they were suddenly shot at. A *Reuters* photographer stated that they shouted to the soldiers in Hebrew and English that they were from the press but the soldiers continued shooting. The cameraman stated that he had been shot in the head and that all those who tried to help him had been shot at as well. When he tried to crawl away, he was shot again in the shoulder and then in the leg. Commenting on the incident, Hebron Commander Col. Yigal Sharon stated that IDF troops had acted with restraint and fired rubber bullets only while dispersing Palestinian rioters. The journalists were hit since they were not standing on the side but mingling with the rioting crowd. Foreign Press Association spokesman Conny Mus rejected the army's explanation, stating that the facts were recorded in the video footage of the incident. "According to our findings, our respected colleagues were shot at deliberately", he stated, adding that one photographer had been shot at least three times while he was lying wounded on the ground. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 March)

249. On 14 March, in a protest against an incident in which eight photographers were injured by IDF rubber bullets in Hebron, Palestinian journalists carried cameras on stretchers to the Hebron Municipality, alleging that IDF troops persistently and deliberately shot at Palestinian journalists and cameramen. The journalists demanded that the Israeli Government and the international community intervene to prevent attacks against the Palestinian press from recurring. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 March)

250. On 6 May, the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group accused the Israeli security forces of preventing Arab journalists in Hebron from doing their job. In its monthly publication, the organization detailed incidents ranging from seizing cameras to shooting by soldiers of eight journalists on 13 March. An IDF spokeswoman referred to a military investigation of the shooting incident that determined that soldiers could not distinguish between the journalists and stone-throwers since the area was dimly lit. She noted that soldiers were under strict orders not to attack journalists. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 May)

3. Information on the activities of settlers affecting the civilian population

251. On 4 January, the police evicted from Hebron and Kiryat Arba some 30 settlers who had taken over a two-storey house in the Hebron casbah in response to an attack in which two pipe bombs were thrown into a nursery school and a kindergarten in the Avraham Avinu quarter on 2 January. The settlers were detained for questioning but were released several hours later. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 5 January)

252. On 8 January, the tyres of 43 Palestinian cars were slashed in the Arab section of the Abu Tor neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. Activists from the outlawed "Kach" movement claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that it was perpetrated in revenge for the "terrorist" attack in Samaria (West Bank) a week earlier. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 9 January)

253. On 9 March, it was reported that the police command had recently decided to remove the Hebron police chief from office. Senior officers in the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) district police claimed that the decision was made following pressure by settlers in the town, a charge denied by the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police spokesman. One senior Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police source alleged that it seemed that the police were looking for someone who would treat the settlers with more flexibility. The Hebron settlement spokesman welcomed the decision to replace the police chief, indicating that settlers had serious complaints against him. He expressed the hope that better relations would be established with a new chief. Some 60 files against settler offences, including attacks against Palestinians, policemen and damage to property, are said to have been filed with the Hebron police station. Police sources in the town expressed the fear that following the replacement of the Hebron police chief, numerous files would be closed. Senior police officers in Hebron stated that settlers in the town made work very difficult for the policemen. Among other things, they submitted numerous complaints to the Justice Ministry's police investigation department. These steps, they claimed, deterred many policemen from taking action against settlers who did not abide by the law. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 March)

254. On 12 March, Hebron settlers staged a parade to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Purim as violent clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians continued in the town

for the second consecutive day. Large numbers of IDF and police forces were deployed in the town to provide security for the parade. Several roads were closed to Palestinian traffic to clear the way for the parade, which moved down from Tel Rumeideh along Shuhada Street before continuing to the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) . Children were seen in an array of costumes, including one boy dressed up as Baruch Goldstein, the man who carried out the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) massacre. As soon as the parade reached Shuhada Street, a barrage of stones were thrown at IDF soldiers who responded with rubber bullets. Settlers then started dancing on the square which they called Gross while Palestinian residents were moved away. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 13 March)

255. On 13 March, some 30 settlers from Hebron stormed the Abu Sneinah neighbourhood where they stoned and beat Palestinian residents. They also smashed windscreens of cars, house windows and damaged property before being forced to leave by IDF soldiers. Palestinian sources reported that 12 residents were injured during the confrontation with the settlers, and by IDF rubber bullets. A five-month-old-baby was also injured by stones. According to a *Reuters* news reporter in Hebron, settlers beat the residents and threw stones at cars under the very eyes of IDF soldiers. Settlers also rioted in the Tel Rumeideh neighbourhood, where they entered a grocer's shop and beat a Palestinian who, as a result, required medical treatment at Aliya Hospital. The settlers claimed that they were protesting against an incident in which shots were fired at the Avraham Avinu quarter, adding that it was the third time that shots had been fired at the Jewish quarter over the past week. Their action led to an outbreak of rioting during which several IDF soldiers and border policemen were injured by stones, in addition to 8 Palestinian journalists and 20 Palestinians who were wounded by IDF rubber bullets, according to Israeli sources. West Bank Preventive Security Chief Jibril Rajoub stated that the number of injured Palestinians was higher, approximately 100. An official statement issued by the Palestinian Authority called for the international community to provide protection to the Palestinians against "the evident daily acts of Israeli aggression". (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 March; *Jerusalem Post*, 16, 17, 18 and 19 March)

256. On 15 March, Palestinians in Hebron woke up to discover that 24 windows of Palestinian cars had been smashed during the night. The right-wing Committee for Road Safety claimed responsibility for the action, stating that it was carried out in response to shots fired at the Jewish community in the town. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 16 March)

257. On 2 April, a violent confrontation broke out between Palestinian policemen and IDF soldiers near the Morag settlement in Gush Katif (Gaza Strip). The incident reportedly occurred after a group of Palestinian youths had started to cut down old tamarisk trees near the Morag settlement. The residents of the settlements tried to prevent them from continuing to cut down the trees and IDF troops and the Palestinian police were called in. The Palestinian policemen claimed that the area was outside the settlement and under Palestinian control and therefore Palestinians had the right to cut the trees which did not belong to the settlement. The Palestinian policemen reportedly drew their guns and attacked some soldiers. Additional forces were called in and tried to calm the situation. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 April)

258. On 12 April, tens of thousands of Jews flocked to Hebron to celebrate Israel's fiftieth anniversary and the thirtieth anniversary of the renewal of the Hebron Jewish community. Visitors were welcomed by the community and given explanations about the city's different quarters. Dignitaries attending the events included Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau, Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, Education Minister Shaul Yahalom, Meir Porush (United Torah Judaism) and Likud MK Michael Eitan who declared that the Government was interested in maintaining the Jewish presence in Hebron and at the same time protecting the rights of the Palestinians and honouring signed agreements. (*Jerusalem Post*, 13 April)

259. On 20 April, settlers from Moshav Ma'aon responded to the murder of a settler the day before, allegedly by Palestinian Bedouin, by placing two mobile homes at the scene of the attack in order to show their Palestinian neighbours that they would not be coerced into leaving the area. Palestinians set up a tent near the site to protest against the settlers' action. Lawyer Linda Brayer of the Society of Saint Yves Association, who represented the Palestinian families, announced that she would appeal to the court on behalf of her clients against the occupation of their land. In a related development, five Palestinian tents were set on fire near the Sussiya settlement in southern Mount Hebron. The encampment belonged to Palestinian families who lived 800 metres from the settlement. The families blamed settlers from Sussiya for the arson attack. They indicated that the attack had started at 3 a.m. when incendiary bottles were thrown at their tents. One resident stated that he saw five men wearing skullcaps. During the attack, property was damaged but no one was injured. The families reportedly had their tents confiscated in March on the grounds that they were located in a closed military zone. They appealed to the High Court of Justice, which issued an interim order on 12

April forbidding their eviction and they returned to their place of residence. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 21 April)

260. On 5 May, Palestinians pitched a tent in front of the Meitzad settlement to protest against the digging of holes outside the settlement fence by a Jewish tractor driver who said that he had been sent by "Amana", the settlement branch of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza, to carry out infrastructure work for a new agricultural farm. The Council stated in response that it had no connection with the works, which it presumed were carried out by a private contractor hired by one of the settlers on his own initiative. In another development, IDF halted the paving of an asphalt road by Jews between the Ma'aon settlement and the Ma'aon farm where a settler had been murdered some two weeks earlier. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 May)

261. On 6 May, students from the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva pitched a tent in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and moved to a house the yeshiva owned outside the Lions' Gate in response to the killing of a fellow student earlier in the day. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 7 May)

262. On 7 May, the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva students scuffled with *Waqf* officials over the ownership of a house they occupied in the Old City of Jerusalem. Police forcibly removed the *Waqf* officials and detained them for questioning. Jerusalem District Police Commander Yair Yitzhaki stated that records proved that the yeshiva had purchased the house legally and therefore there was no reason to evict the new tenants. Under heavy police guard, the yeshiva students continued to renovate the occupied building as fellow students pitched tents on land they claimed was theirs in the Muslim Quarter. Members of the Palestinian family that claimed ownership of the occupied house stated that they had papers dating back 100 years that proved the house was theirs. Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, director of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, charged that the settlers' actions constituted an attack by settlers that was just one of many aimed at Judaizing the city of Jerusalem. "This is a den of settlers in a Muslim neighbourhood and creates more tension", he charged. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 8 May)

263. On 21 May, a female reporter working for a local television station in Hebron and a television photographer who accompanied her were stoned by settlers in the Tel Rumeideh neighbourhood of Hebron. The incident occurred when the reporter arrived in the neighbourhood to report on Palestinian children living near the Tel Rumeideh settlement comprised of seven families. Upon their arrival, two female settlers ordered them to leave and started to stone them when they refused to do so. According to a Palestinian family, soldiers did not intervene. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 May)

264. On 23 May, celebrations marking the thirty-first anniversary of Jerusalem's unification got under way, with dancing and singing centred in and around the Old City of Jerusalem that lasted well into the night. In the Old City, hundreds of youths danced with the Israeli flag at the Western Wall plaza, while fireworks were set off over Mount Zion. On the Mount of Olives, busloads of revellers came to the Beit Orot Yeshiva to join the Mayor of Jerusalem and Members of the Knesset. Palestinian leaders stated that the Israeli celebrations would not deter them from establishing an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital. "Jerusalem is part of Palestinian land occupied in 1967", Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat told reporters upon his return to Gaza from Cairo. "It should be known that Jerusalem is part of our land occupied in 1967, and this includes East Jerusalem". (*Jerusalem Post*, 24 and 25 May)

265. On 24 May, Yerushalaim Shelanu (Our Jerusalem) activists gathered at Orient House, insisting on flying the Israeli flag there. They also exchanged words with Orient House officials. In the end, an Orient House guard came out and pushed the demonstrators away. In another incident in the vicinity of Orient House, Temple Mount Faithful activists burned a coffin carrying the inscription "the Oslo Accords" and "a State of Terrorists" during a parade to mark Jerusalem Day. (*Ha'aretz*, 25 May)

266. On 24 May, Ateret Cohanim students moved into yet another house in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem after the Arab woman who had been living there for decades was forcibly evicted and her belongings carried out and put on the street. The occupation of the house came following a ruling by the High Court of Justice that the house belonged to a Jewish family. During the eviction, large numbers of border police forces closed adjacent streets and prevented Palestinians from coming to the site. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 26 May)

267. On 24 May, a small group of Jewish extremists made an unsuccessful attempt to enter the Temple Mount in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on the occasion of Jerusalem Day. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 29 May)

268. On 26 May, 15 Palestinian Legislative Council members interrupted their morning meeting in Ramallah and rushed to the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem to protest against 10 tin shacks that had been erected there overnight by members of the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva. Several dozen Palestinians quickly joined the Council members who announced that their presence there was a meeting of the parliament, the first such meeting in Jerusalem. The demonstration turned violent when protesters

charged towards the yeshiva enclave and tore down one of the shacks. Border policemen then started swinging clubs, trying to push back the protesters. At one point, they forced the legislators into one of the shacks to separate them from the others. Eleven protesters were slightly injured, including Faisal Husseini who was bleeding from arm wounds after the melee. Later in the day, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert signed a demolition order giving the families that had moved into the shacks 24 hours to vacate them. Mr. Olmert explained that he had no objection in principle to the construction of a Jewish neighbourhood in the Muslim Quarter but that the families had not submitted plans to the city. Commenting on the protest, David Bar Illan, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's communications adviser, stated that it was a blatant violation of the peace accords which restricted the Palestinian Authority to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Faisal Husseini stated in response that the erection of the shacks was "a clear violation and an attempt to change the situation in the city despite the Oslo Accords, which prohibit such steps". (Ha'aretz, *Jerusalem Post*, 27 May; *Ha'aretz*, 29 May)

269. On 26 May, the Ateret Cohanim settlers seized and set up shacks on a property at Burj Al Laqlaq in the Old City of Jerusalem. The settlers' takeover coincided with another move by some 30 members of the same extremist group who evicted a Palestinian family from their house in Aqbat Saraya, claiming that the house belonged to Jews. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 29 May)

270. On 31 May, hundreds of orthodox Jews attacked Arab property in East Jerusalem and threw stones at Palestinians, injuring nine, eight slightly and one moderately. The incident took place at the conclusion of prayers at the Western Wall plaza when thousands of orthodox Jews marched through the Old City streets towards Nablus Gate, smearing the locks of Palestinian shops with glue and smashing car windows. In the vicinity of Nablus Gate, hundreds of orthodox Jews also started stoning Palestinian shops. Palestinian youths responded with stones. Police forces then forcibly dispersed the orthodox Jews and the Palestinians and detained for questioning four Palestinians and an orthodox Jew who had thrown stones at them. Palestinian merchants whose shops were damaged by the attacks stated that although such incidents repeated themselves every year, the police were not doing enough to protect them and their shops. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 June)

D. Situation of detainees and prisoners

271. On 2 January, a Palestinian administrative detainee was released from detention in Damon Prison a month and a half before the date set for his release under extended administrative detention orders. A military judge who heard his appeal on 18 November 1997 decided to release him earlier. Wissam Rafidi, aged 39, was one of the longest-standing Palestinian administrative detainees in Israel. He was arrested in August 1994 in El Bireh and his detention orders were extended repeatedly. The most recent extension dated back to 18 September 1997 (until 17 March). (*Ha'aretz*, 4 January)

272. On 4 January, an administrative detainee from Abud village was released from Damon Prison following an appeal filed in December 1997. The man, aged 41, was arrested in November 1996 and had had his detention extended by five months and then every five months until February. On 4 December, Lawyer Peleg from the Centre for the Protection of the Individual filed an appeal with a military judge who ruled on 18 December that the detention period should be shortened to three months. (*Ha'aretz*, 5 January)

273. On 6 January, following a 40-day hunger strike, Islamic Jihad activist Ataef Alayan was released from administrative detention. Alayan, whose arrest on 20 October had sparked riots in the West Bank, was one of 23 Palestinians who were released earlier as a traditional goodwill gesture on the occasion of Ramadan. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 7 January)

274. On 7 January, the High Court of Justice, sitting as a rare nine-justice bench, heard petitions by two Palestinian security detainees against interrogation methods allegedly amounting to torture employed against them by GSS. The detainees charged that during several "waiting" periods between interrogations (periods that lasted from a few hours to days), they were forced to sit on a low chair with their hands tied behind their backs, their heads covered with a sack, while loud music was played. GSS argued that these special methods of interrogation were necessary in the case of the two petitioners in order to elicit information that could prevent "terrorist" attacks. The justices reportedly seemed sympathetic to the petitioners' demands. The High Court President, Aharon Barak, stated that the Court had received numerous complaints, leading him to believe that the methods were not used exclusively against suspects holding potentially vital security information. On 11 January, however, countering the President's opinion, the Court issued a ruling allowing GSS to continue using force to

extract information from the two detainees. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 and 12 January; *Jerusalem Post*, 2, 7, 8 and 12 January)

275. On 9 January, it was reported that administrative detainee Ataef Alayan, detained in October 1997, has been released. Alayan's case became the subject of widespread protest in the self-rule areas when she went on a 40-day hunger strike to demand her release and to protest against Israel's policy of political detention and arbitrary renewal of the period of custody. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 January)

276. On 28 January, Ahmed Katamesh, the longest-standing administrative detainee, was unexpectedly transferred from Damon to Kishon Prison. Palestinian human rights activists expressed fears that Katamesh, who was arrested on 1 September 1992, had been taken for interrogation in the GSS wing at Kishon, an allegation denied by the Prison Service spokeswoman. (*Ha'aretz*, 29 January)

277. On 29 January, five Palestinian security prisoners who had been sentenced to life imprisonment for the killing of Palestinians in the territories were released on orders signed by the OC Central Command. (*Ha'aretz*, 30 January)

278. On 8 February, it was reported that the Israeli Cabinet had approved the Shin Bet (GSS) draft law. Palestinian and international human rights groups pointed out that the draft law did not specify the Shin Bet's powers and methods of interrogation, which still fell under another piece of legislation, the Prevention of Terror Ordinance. The omission alarms human rights groups who claim that GSS methods (tying up in painful positions, hooding and sleep deprivation) would continue to be used against Palestinian detainees under the facade of ambiguous legislation. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 13 February)

279. On 20 February, a 30-year-old Arab who was arrested on 26 January at the Katsina junction on suspicion of carrying explosives with the intent of carrying out an attack in Jerusalem was released on personal bail. Another 30-year-old Arab arrested on similar charges had been released at an earlier date. The man stated that after his arrest he was beaten severely by policemen who ordered him to tell them immediately where the explosives were. He also stated that a police robot had riddled his car with bullets while it was being checked. The man claimed that the motive for his arrest was an ironic conversation he had with his mother on a cellular phone during which he told her, when she asked him when he would return home from the Al-Aqsa Mosque, that he did not want to return but to die there. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 February)

280. On 4 March, Palestinian officials, including Fatah leaders in Jenin, called upon Israel to hand over a 32-year-old Palestinian man and former leader of a "Black Panthers" cell in the Jenin area whom they claimed was abducted by IDF troops on 28 February. The officials stated that the man was serving a nine-year sentence handed down by a Palestinian court for his involvement in the murder of collaborators and the abduction of two border policemen in 1996. According to the Governor of Jenin, IDF arrested the detainee while he was on short leave from prison. The IDF spokesman confirmed that IDF troops on operational duty had arrested the detainee and another Palestinian in Kadim. (*Jerusalem Post*, 4 March)

281. On 30 March, the High Court of Justice rejected a petition by the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel calling for an inquiry into the alleged torture of a 38-year-old Palestinian detainee during his interrogation by GSS at the Russian Compound lock-up in Jerusalem. In its petition, the Committee charged that physical pressure had been brought to bear on the detainee, including shaking, beating and strangling. This, the Committee charged, had led to the need to hospitalize him. It also claimed that the detainee, who had been arrested more than one month earlier on charges of involvement with the Islamic Jihad, was not allowed to consult a lawyer in the first 28 days of his detention. During the hearing, the representative of the State Attorney's Office denied that the detainee had been shaken, beaten, choked or subjected to any other "physical measures". (*Ha'aretz*, 30 March; *Jerusalem Post*, 31 March)

282. On 31 March, Ribhi Katamesh was released after a long period of administrative detention. Ribhi Katamesh, the brother of the longest-serving administrative detainee Ahmed Katamesh, was detained since 1994. He suffers from heart disease and his health is said to have deteriorated in recent weeks. He was informed about his release the same day. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 April)

283. On 3 April, it was reported that following an intervention by OC Meggido Prison, Eyal Ben Zur, an administrative detention order issued against a detainee was revoked. Ben Zur considered the order, which was issued only one day before the detainee was expected to be released, to be a violation of an agreement reached between the prison authorities and army officers on the one hand, and the prison authorities and detainees, on the other. According to the agreement, orders extending administrative detention were to be issued 10 days prior to the scheduled release of a detainee. In another development at Meggido Prison, three prisoners nearing the end of their sentences were issued new administrative detention orders ranging from three to six months. The detainees are said to have been imprisoned, respectively, for five years, 30 months and three and a half years. In a positive development, military judges are said to

have recently shortened the administrative detention of dozens of detainees. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 April)

284. On 9 April, IDF released eight Palestinians from army prisons as a goodwill gesture on the occasion of the Eid-al-Adha. Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai approved the release at the recommendation of IDF and GSS. IDF refused to reveal the identities of the prisoners, but insisted that they were close to the end of their sentences and that none of them had "blood on his hands". (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 April)

285. On 9 April, the Centre for the Protection of the Individual and the Association for Human Rights appealed to the High Court of Justice to order the immediate release of an administrative detainee whose detention was extended by an army officer after a military judge had ordered his release. (*Ha'aretz*, 10 April)

286. On 15 April, IDF released Ahmed Katamesh, a leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the longest-serving administrative detainee. Another administrative detainee, Hassan Fatafta, was also released. The 45-year-old Katamesh had been held in administrative detention since 1 September 1992. He was released after he had signed a pledge not to engage in violent activities against Israel. Upon his release from Damon Prison, Katamesh expressed his solidarity with those who were still in prison because of the policy of administrative detention, adding that "even during the racist regime in South Africa, arrests were only for six months". More than 200 administrative detainees remain detained by Israel. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 16 April)

287. On 15 April, Israeli security forces released the longest-serving Palestinian administrative detainee, Ahmed Katamesh, from Damon Prison, following five and a half years of detention. Another detainee, Hassan Fatafta, was also released. According to the Israeli press, the release was granted on condition that Katamesh appear on Israeli television and issue a statement expressing personal condemnation of violent activities. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 18 April)

288. On 15 April, the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Information launched a campaign under the slogan "Freedom for the imprisoned freedom fighters". The aim of the campaign is to gather 1 million Palestinian signatures to be sent to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to all United Nations Member States, urging them to bring about the release of both Palestinian and Arab prisoners held in Israeli jails. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 18 April)

289. On 16 April, the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* reported that 96 Palestinians had been placed under administrative detention by the Israeli authorities on the grounds of security. The majority of the new detainees came from the West Bank. Israel was recently forced to reduce the number of detainees from 500 to 160, and to set free 116 who had been detained for four consecutive years. The move came in response to combined pressure from an international campaign by legal and humanitarian organizations and local efforts from Israeli intellectuals and Knesset members. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 1 May)

290. On 19 April, it was reported that since the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords, Israel had released more than 3,000 Palestinian prisoners held for security-related offences. However, an estimated 5,000 are still in prison. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 April)

291. On 28 April, the security authorities extended by four months the detention of the longest-serving administrative detainee, Ussama Birham, who is reported to have been held in Israel without trial since September 1993. He is suspected by GSS of belonging to the Islamic Jihad. Prior to his administrative detention, Birham had served a seven year prison sentence. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 April)

292. On 14 May, it was reported that Israel had submitted to the United Nations Committee against Torture a second periodic report, as required under the 1984 international Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The report informed the Committee of steps being taken concerning a GSS bill which would define for the first time the duties and spheres of competence of the Service. It stated that 81 complaints against GSS interrogations had been submitted to the Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Department in 1995. Anomalies had been found in four cases and had been dealt with administratively within GSS, and sanctions taken against those involved. In one case, concerning the death of Abed Harizat, the GSS interrogator was tried in a disciplinary court. GSS, the report stated, organized courses and seminars for its employees, especially interrogators, with a view to teaching them the principles of basic rights and human dignity. The report claimed further that the Israeli police had adopted the recommendations of the Kremnitzer Committee Against Police Violence and appointed a team to implement them. The team had begun operating only recently but the recommendations were already being implemented, including the rigorous selection of candidates for service. In another report submitted to the Committee against Torture, B'tselem and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel stated that GSS has subjected to torture some 85 per cent of the 1,000 to 1,500 Palestinians it interrogated every year. Israel, they observed, continued to justify torture in its answers to appeals submitted by interrogees to the

High Court of Justice. Israel had not enacted a law against torture so far and had not taken any substantial steps to that effect. The Landau Commission's directives continued to remain secret, even if much was known about the methods used by GSS. The interrogation methods detailed in the report included sleep deprivation, starvation, putting dirty sacks on detainees' heads, playing them loud music for many days, forcing them to sit on a small chair with their hands tied behind the back or kneel in painful positions, exposing them to extreme heat or cold, and slapping, kicking, beating and shaking them violently. The report claimed further that Israel held more than 100 Palestinians and Lebanese under administrative detention orders which could be extended indefinitely. Some Palestinians had been detained for more than four years without knowing when they would be released. The human rights organizations pointed out that, contrary to the impression given by the State's report, police violence remained a serious problem in Israel and that only a small number of the Kremnitzer Committee's recommendations to that effect had been implemented. The conditions in detention facilities and prisons continued to be extremely harsh and in some facilities prisoners were held in conditions amounting to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, in violation of the International Convention. (*Ha'aretz*, 14 May)

293. On 19 May, the B'tselem human rights organization held a press conference in Jerusalem after producing a report detailing GSS interrogation methods. The report, entitled "Torture as a routine: GSS interrogation methods", stated that the torture of Palestinian interrogees was common daily practice. It stated that between 1,000 and 1,500 Palestinians were interrogated by GSS every year, 85 per cent of whom were tortured by a variety of methods including violent shaking, beatings, shackling, tying them up in painful positions and placing hoods drenched with urine or vomit over their heads, subjecting them to sleep deprivation and incessantly playing them loud music through loudspeakers. In addition, interrogators threatened to kill them and cited the names of persons who had died during interrogation. They also made threats, sometimes of a sexual nature, against the interrogees' families. The report also observed that during the whole period of interrogation which could last several months, interrogees were not allowed to change clothes. They were given food in a filthy toilet without even minimal sanitary arrangements. Their cells were tiny and crowded. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 20 May)

294. On 27 May, the Centre for the Protection of the Individual and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel appealed to the High Court of Justice to order the immediate release of an administrative detainee who had his detention extended by OC IDF troops in the West Bank after a military judge had ordered his release. The petitioners claimed that the officer was not authorized to extend the detention and that his decision rendered the institution of judicial supervision of administrative detention totally ineffective. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 May)

E. Annexation and settlement

295. On 2 January, the United States of America expressed displeasure at the laying of a cornerstone on 31 December 1997 for new Jewish homes in the West Bank settlement of Beit El. The deputy spokesman of the United States State Department stated that increasing settlement construction did not help to create the kind of environment required for building confidence between the two sides. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 January)

296. On 4 January, IDF confiscated 32 hectares near the area of the Gush Katif settlements in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian farmers said the bulldozers had begun leveling the land which lies close to the Khan Younis seashore, destroying crops. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 January)

297. On 6 January, it was reported that infrastructure work for the Har Homa settlement in Jerusalem was continuing, with tenders for construction expected to be issued during the first quarter. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 January)

298. On 6 January, an official spokesman for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate denied a report saying that the Patriarchate had sold 70 dunums of land on Jebel Abu Ghneim in Jerusalem, adding that the Patriarchate did not own any land in the area. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 January)

299. On 7 January, the Government approved the construction of 575 housing units in the Efrat settlement. An Israeli government official stated that general permission for the construction of these homes had already been given under the former Labour Government, adding that now that the permission had been granted, work could begin immediately. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 8 January)

300. On 7 January, the Legal Centre for Land Defence stated that a total 4,500 dunums of land had been confiscated by Israel during December 1997 in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 January)

301. On 7 January, the head of the Cartography Department at the Arab Studies Centre in Orient House, Khalil Tufakji, disclosed that the Israeli authorities had approved plans for a new road, Route 70, which would loop around the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem, north towards El Bireh-Ramallah and

south towards Bethlehem. The project affects 1,550 dunums of land belonging to the villages of Ananta, A-Tue, Izzariyeh, Abu Dis, Sawahrah and Zayyem. Many houses along the El Bireh-Ramallah line are threatened with demolition. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 January)

302. On 8 January, OC Central Command, Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan, met with settlers from the Peduel and Alei Zahav settlements to discuss their safety and security concerns following a Civil Administration order halting the construction of a road bypassing the nearby villages of Kfar a-Dik and Burkin. After the meeting, settlers stated that they had hoped to receive permission to continue work on the road within the coming days. The Defence Ministry reportedly claimed that the road was included in a list of several bypass roads whose construction awaited approval. In a related development, Israeli Television Channel 7 reported that Palestinians in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) had constructed several roads "illegally" in order to link isolated villages to the main towns under the Palestinian Authority's control. One example cited in the report was a road built by Palestinians in the villages of Natsra and Burkin that went south towards Aurora, with the aim of eventually reaching Bir Zeit near Ramallah. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 January)

303. On 9 January, it was reported that according to a document obtained by *Ha'aretz*, the Housing Ministry had plans for the construction of 30,000 housing units in settlements. For half of that number, the construction of 14,600 new apartments, authorization is said to have already been received or plans were in the final stages of approval. Other housing unit plans were already authorized by Defence Minister Itzhak Mordechai and were already under construction. Other projects, which were approved by the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) Planning Committee, were awaiting authorization by the Minister. Construction projects in some settlements were expected to at least double the settler population. There are currently some 400 housing units in the Maaleh Efraim settlement. Recently approved housing Ministry plans envisaged the construction of an additional 561 housing units. There are 1,150 housing units in the Efrat settlement. A plan, approved earlier in the week would add 922 units to it. The construction of 1,330 housing units is said to have been approved in the orthodox settlement of Beitar Elit. Plans for an additional 5,000 apartments in the settlement were in the early stages of approval. Plans for the construction of 2,200 housing units in Givat Binyamin were about to be approved, in addition to plans for 921 housing units which had already received approval. A plan for the construction of 1,300 housing units in the Givat Zeev settlement was also expected to be approved. The Maaleh Adumim settlement, which currently numbers some 20,000 people living in approximately 5,000 housing units, will double in size since Housing Ministry plans envisaged the construction of 4,050 new housing units, of which 428 have already been approved. The Ofarim settlement was also expected to grow many times over thanks to four plans for the construction of 6,741 housing units. The Alfei Menasheh settlement was expected to double in size as a result of plans for the construction of 1,414 housing units. In the Ariel settlement, 3,690 new housing units were slated for construction which currently has 3,300 housing units. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 January)

304. The planned settlement expansion came under fire from Palestinian leaders and the Peace Now movement. Palestinian Authority official Sa'eb Erekat accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of being determined to "finish off the peace process before his Government finishes". Peace Now accused the Government of approving construction that exceeded the requirements of natural growth, alleging that such actions could prevent another West Bank pull-out and plunge the country into war. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 9 January)

305. On 15 January, it was reported that the Government had recently authorized plans for the building of six housing units for Jewish settlers next to the Avraham Avinu quarter in Hebron. In addition, settlers were said to be drawing up plans for an additional 300 housing units, the construction of which they hoped would eventually be approved. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's communications adviser, David Bar Illan, stated in this connection that while the Government supported a Jewish presence in Hebron, he was unable to indicate when approval for further construction would be given. (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 January)

306. On 17 January, the Orient House issued a statement accusing Israel of expanding its settlements in the area west of Ramallah in order to create a new geographical and demographic reality. The statement said that Israel had recently intensified its activities in that area, paving new roads with the aim of creating links between the settlements and isolating the Palestinian villages. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 January)

307. On 21 January, four Palestinians were arrested by the police after they had attempted to block a bulldozer working on land near the Adura settlement. Villagers from the Dura and Tafuh villages claimed that the land belonged to them and that they nad petitioned the High Court of Justice to prevent it being confiscated. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 January)

308. On 23 January, following a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud

Olmert expressed his optimism regarding the position that the construction of the Har Homa settlement would begin soon. The two also agreed to set up a committee made up of representatives of the Prime Minister's office, the Jerusalem Municipality, the Interior Ministry and the Jerusalem Development Authority, whose objective would be to prepare a plan for several years to "strengthen Jerusalem" in the fields of education, housing, employment and culture. (*Ha'aretz*, 25 January)

309. On 23 January, Deputy Housing and Construction Minister, MK Meir Porush, answering an interpellation by MK Ofir Pins, claimed that there were 1,180 empty housing units in the territories, some 1,000 of which were in rural areas and some 180 in urban zones. (*Ha'aretz*, 26 January)

310. On 23 January, it was reported that the Israeli authorities had begun laying Settler Route 45 which links the coastal areas of Israel with the Jordan Valley. As a first step, the new route is to link Lydda Airport with the Jerusalem airport at Qalandia. Some 2,200 dunums of land have been seized for that purpose. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 January)

311. On 26 January, it was reported that the Ateret Cohanim group had started to renovate five buildings it owned in the Old City of Jerusalem prior to occupying them. This was in addition to the 13 other homes that it planned to renovate in the Old City. Under an agreement reached between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Third Way group and the religious parties before the approval of the budget, NIS 30 million were expected to be earmarked to finance the activities of the El Ad and Ateret Cohanim groups (20 million to El Ad and 10 million to Ateret Cohanim). (*Ha'aretz*, 26 January)

312. On 1 February, the Peace Now movement charged that an illegal road had been built between Rehan and Hermesh in Samaria (northern West Bank). The movement's spokesman stated that their settlements monitoring group had discovered the road while touring the area on 31 January. Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's media adviser, Avi Benayahu, stated that the Ministry had not granted approval for any road construction in the area. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 February)

313. On 2 February, it was reported that the Government was preparing a plan to increase by four the number of settlers in the Gush Etzion area. The plan would allow for an increase in the population of the Efrat and Gush Etzion settlements, from the current 13,000 to 50,000 (20,000 in Efrat and 30,000 in Gush Etzion) by 2010. It envisaged a substantial population growth in the orthodox settlement of Beitar by encouraging orthodox Jews from Jerusalem and Bnei Brak to move to the settlement; the expansion of Efrat towards the north-east; the construction of orthodox neighbourhoods in Maaleh Amos and Metzad; the paving of a road linking Tekoa and Nokdim to Har Homa in Jerusalem; and the construction of a new city in the heart of Gush Etzion, between the Alon Shevut settlement and the Nahal (pioneer fighting youth) military settlement of Gvaot on Jewish-owned land bought before the War of Independence. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 February)

314. On 2 February, a former Coordinator of the Government's Activities in the Territories, Maj.-Gen. Oren Shahor, called upon the Israeli authorities to take firm action against Palestinian activities in Greater Jerusalem. Shahor made his statement following a report by the Security Authorities on Greater Jerusalem claiming that Palestinians were trying to extend their control over land in the area and blur the municipal boundaries, and that most Palestinians houses in the area had been built "illegally". (*Ha'aretz*, 1 and 3 February)

315. On 4 February, it was reported that the Interior Ministry had given final approval for the construction of 132 housing units for Jews in the Arab neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud in East Jerusalem. The Ministry also approved a plan to build 500 homes for Arabs in the area. Senior Palestinian Authority officials warned of an outbreak of violence as a result of the decision. Palestinian Authority chief negotiator Sa'eb Erekat declared that the project was "a message for the whole world that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continued to provoke the international community, and to ignore United Nations Security Council resolutions and agreements signed in the White House". Faisal Husseini, the Palestinian Authority Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, protested that on the one hand the Israeli Government demolished Palestinian houses while on the other it approved construction for settlers. He warned that the continuation of such a policy would lead the whole region to conflict and back to the situation which existed prior to the peace process. Peace Now also condemned the Jewish housing project, warning that it threatened the peace process. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 4 February; *Ha'aretz*, 5 and 6 February)

316. On 5 February, it was reported that the Prime Minister's Office was finalizing a plan under which dozens of settlements in the territories would be declared "confrontation line communities", a status reserved so far only for border communities which benefit from special financial aid. In addition, their residents enjoy income tax reductions amounting to 15–20 per cent, as opposed to 3–7 per cent in other development areas. According to a senior official, between 30 and 40 settlements in Samaria, Judea

(West Bank) and Gaza would enjoy the status of "confrontation line communities". They are located near Arab population centres and are either deprived of bypass roads or bypass roads that do not prevent encounters with "terrorists", or their residents suffer from continuous stone-throwing, attacks and loss of working days as a result of the security situation. Among the settlements included in the list were Beit El, Psagot, Ganim, Kadim, Kiryat Arba, the Jewish settlement in Hebron, Netzarim and Kfar Darom. According to Peace Now, the cost of the tax benefits that the some 40 settlements would enjoy under the new plan would amount to NIS 250 million. (*Ha'aretz*, 5 and 6 February)

317. Reacting to the Interior Ministry's final approval for the construction of 132 housing units in the Ras al-Amud Quarter in Arab Jerusalem, Minister without Portfolio Faisal Husseini, the Palestinian Authority official in charge of the Jerusalem file, said on 4 February that the decision was a fresh violation of the signed accords. "It will drive the entire region to the brink of an explosion", he added. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 6 February)

318. On 11 February, Interior Minister Eliahu Suissa stated that if a halt to the construction on Har Homa could help advance the peace process, then building should be delayed for several months. A senior government official stated, however, that there could be no delay in construction. (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 February)

319. On 11 February, it was reported that an examination of the 1996 financial reports submitted by local authorities to the Interior Ministry revealed that settlements benefited the most from government aid, making them attractive to live in. The settlements of Kiryat Arba, Emanuel, Efrat, Elkanah and Ariel, and settlements under the jurisdiction of the regional councils of Mount Hebron, Mateh Yehuda, Gush Etzion, Gaza and Mateh Binyamin received government aid amounting to more than NIS 3 million. Their total population was approximately 103,500 and the councils received from the State for each settler NIS 2,910, a sum larger than that received by development towns where every council received approximately 2,100 per resident, or some 30 per cent less than settlements. (*Ha'aretz*, 11 February)

320. On 16 February, under the heavy guard of a 260-strong police force from Judea and Samaria (West Bank) headed by the Vice Commander of the Judea District (Southern West Bank) and border police forces, the Civil Administration evicted some 140 Jahalin Bedouin from an area south of the Maaleh Adumim settlement to a site assigned to them near the Abu Dis garbage dump. OC Civil Administration Inspection Team, David Gilo, revealed that a similar fate awaited hundreds of other Bedouin who lived in the area. After loading their belongings onto trucks, bulldozers levelled their tents and tin shacks. Their belongings and food were then unloaded at the entrance to the Jerusalem garbage dump. According to the Bedouin's lawyer, Civil Administration inspectors allowed the Bedouin to collect their belongings only when they were covered by heaps of garbage and earth. Police sources pointed out with satisfaction to the lack of resistance by those evicted owing to the massive deployment of police in an operation which one senior police officer described as a "crash raid". The evicted Bedouin families had been living in the area since they were banished from Tel Arad at the beginning of the 1950s. They would now have to join some 160 other families from the same tribe which the Civil Administration had already evicted to an alternative site near the Abu Dis garbage dump. The tribe's 15-year dispute with the Israeli authorities ended on 4 September when the High Court of Justice rejected their final petition against the eviction. The tribe's spokesman, Mohammed Hiresh, stated that they had refused to move to the alternative site allocated to them because it was rocky, which prevented them from grazing their goats, and because of its location near a garbage dump. Other Bedouin also claimed that the alternative sites allocated to them were already too crowded and did not meet their needs or correspond to their way of living. Israel, however, has a huge master plan for the Maaleh Adumim settlement covering the area from the Dead Sea to Jerusalem, almost equivalent to the area of Tel Aviv, which therefore meant that all the Bedouin had to be evicted. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 17 February)

321. On 16 February, an Israeli District Court sold a plot of land owned by a Palestinian to a Jewish investor without the knowledge of the owner. Haj Issa Azzat, from the village of Beit Safafa in southern Jerusalem, claimed that he had bought the 10 dunums of land in 1972 and had since been attempting to register it in the Jerusalem Land Registry. Azzat added he had even turned to the High Court in 1996 in an attempt to force the municipality to issue him a registration certificate after he had learned that the land next to his had been bought by a Jewish investor from a Palestinian in Beit Safafa. It became known that District Court Judge Yoel Tsur had ordered that the plots in that area, including Azzat's, were to be registered in the name of investor Shaul Cohen. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 20 February)

322. On 17 February, dozens of Bedouin from the Jahalin tribe spent a night under the open sky around fires on the site from which they had been evicted the day before. They returned to the site despite the fact that the Civil Administration had removed their belongings to an alternative site allocated to them west of Maaleh Adumim

and declared their intention of staying there. The Palestinian Authority provided them with tents. However, Civil Administration inspectors, accompanied by numerous police from Judea and Samaria (West Bank), confiscated the tents and detained four Bedouin for questioning. Among those detained was reportedly a father of 13 who had stretched a piece of cloth between two barrels to protect his children from the cold. One Bedouin claimed that the Civil Administration had seized the tents with all their contents, leaving them without belongings. The Civil Administration stated in response that "there was nothing in the tents". The Secretary-General of Rabbis for Human Rights stated that his association intended to provide the Bedouin who stayed at the site with food and blankets. A delegation of rabbis from the association was not allowed to enter the site. (*Ha'aretz*, 18 and 22 February)

323. On 17 February, it was reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to order in the near future the publishing of tenders for the construction of the new Har Homa settlement. In addition, Mr. Netanyahu promised to take the necessary measures for the construction of four bypass roads: El Arov bypass, Bethlehem bypass, Nablus bypass and road 45. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 February)

324. On 18 February, it was reported that some 5,000 new housing units had been built over the past year in settlements, of which some 80 per cent had already been sold. According to officials at the Prime Minister's Office, the high demand for apartments in settlements was due to low prices rather than ideological motives. Low prices resulted from the classification of the settlements as development area "A" which reduced by 50 per cent the price of land. In addition, most of the construction was carried out by the settlement branch of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza for non-profit purposes. For example, the 37 housing units which were put up for sale in the Allon settlement at the beginning of the month were sold overnight. In the Talmon settlement, 40 housing units were put on sale and bought immediately, with one senior official describing the demand as simply "dizzying". (*Ha'aretz*, 18 February)

325. On 21 February, some 50 left-wing activists joined several dozen villagers from Salfit and Iskaka to plant olive trees on disputed land near the Ariel settlement. In December, the settlers started paving a road on land planted with olives trees which belonged to the residents of the village. The villagers also wished to build a road that would allow their vehicles to reach remote plots in the area. The army prevented the continuation of work by both sides until the question of ownership of the land was sorted out. Another joint Israeli-Palestinian protest against settlers and the army took place in Kfar Kadum in connection with the Israeli authorities' decision to confiscate an additional 1,000 dunums of land from the village for an Israeli industrial zone. Residents also complained that settlers had seized 108 dunums of farm land owned by one of the families and had built various structures on it. The family who owned the land stated that in a TV broadcast in August 1997 that a security official had declared that the presence of settlers in the area was illegal and that they would be evicted. At the end of the year, however, the Israeli authorities published a new map of the area in which most of the land in question was designated as "state-owned". (*Ha'aretz*, 22 February)

326. On 22 February, the High Court of Justice issued an interim order forbidding changes in the situation of the Jahalin tribe's enclave east of Maaleh Adumim. A week earlier, the Civil Administration demolished tin shacks and pens belonging to the Jahalin tribe and requested them to leave the site located east of Maaleh Adumim. They refused and had been living in the open ever since despite the confiscation of their tents. The High Court's injunction followed a petition by the lawyer representing the evicted persons, according to which the Civil Administration had taken illegal steps and carried out an illegal demolition. A hearing was set for the following week. A short time before the Court issued its injunction, Civil Administration inspectors handed an eviction order to the Bedouin. The nature of the offence was "presence of people and personal equipment on state-owned land". The order, which was signed by OC Civil Administration Inspection Unit, gave the Bedouin one day to clear the site. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 February)

327. On 27 February, Bedouin from the Jahalin tribe whose eviction from their place of residence was suspended following an intervention by the High Court of Justice, held a protest prayer under the open sky alongside Jewish worshippers from the association Rabbis for Human Rights. The prayers were held following a joint protest rally at the disputed site near Maaleh Adumim. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 March)

328. On 1 March, the High Court of Justice issued an interim order forbidding the Civil Administration from evicting the Jahalin tribe living east of the Maaleh Adumim settlement or confiscating the tents they had erected in place of their tin shacks which had been demolished by the Civil Administration two weeks earlier. The interim order was to remain valid until the Civil Administration's Appeals Committee had issued its ruling on the question. The Court refused to allow the Bedouin to set up tin shacks on the site and refrained from deciding whether their eviction two weeks earlier was legal. According to the lawyer representing the tribe, 32 families had been ordered to leave their area of residence without being served with eviction

orders or any written documents. They had remained on the site and slept under the open sky. The following day, they were provided with UNRWA tents as a temporary solution, but the tents were confiscated by Civil Administration inspectors. Under a subsequent interim order, they were allowed to pitch them again. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 March)

329. On 2 March, it was reported that during the first 10 months of 1997, the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip had increased by 7.45 per cent and 4.8 per cent, respectively. According to the Interior Ministry's Population Administration, the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip stood at 161,157 at that time. An examination of the growth rates by district revealed that the highest increase occurred in the Nablus area (11.2 per cent). Another major increase in the growth rate was registered in the Ramallah area (10.2 per cent) while in Gaza the Jewish population growth stood at 10 per cent. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 March)

330. On 6 March, four caravans were placed on a hill adjacent to the Alei settlement, bringing to 12 the number of caravans recently placed on that hill. The Civil Administration stated that the land at issue was "State-owned" and that the placement of the caravan was "legal". The caravans reportedly extended the territory of the settlement which was five kilometres wide. The settlement, comprised of 1,000 housing units, is said to have been granted a permit by the Defence Ministry to build an additional 2,500 housing units. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 March)

331. On 6 March, it was reported that the Israeli Government had allocated $5 million for settlements in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights as part of the budget.

332. On 23 March, the Israeli High Court gave the Israeli Government three months to finally make a decision as to why Palestinians from the village of Ikrith have not been allowed back to the village from which they were evicted in 1948. The High Court accepted the argument presented by the State Attorney's office which said that the Government was still considering the case and had not yet reached a final decision. However, the High Court demanded a decision by the Government within three months and, if the State failed to present its answers, the Court would hold another hearing in July. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 27 March)

333. On 25 March, a report compiled by the Interior Ministry's Housing Construction Department stated that 1,291 construction offences had been detected by the Ministry's inspectors in the Jerusalem district, most of them in East Jerusalem. The majority of "offences" in East Jerusalem concerned the construction of entire buildings or floors, unlike most offences in Western Jerusalem, which concerned the addition of a single room or a veranda. Despite this, only a small number of demolitions had been carried out. The report indicated that 10 demolition orders by the Interior Ministry were slated to be executed in East Jerusalem by the end of March, 36 other orders were to be executed in East Jerusalem by January 1999, and 27 administrative orders were being examined by courts. (*Ha'aretz*, 25 March)

334. On 26 March, it was reported that the Defence Minister was taking action to regularize the situation of three settlements in the West Bank which had been established without governmental approval. The status of a recognized community was expected to be granted to at least one of the settlements, named Rechalim, in a procedure referred to by Israeli sources in the territories as "settlement laundering". The housing units at issue were built in recent years without a permit and were inhabited by few families. The security authorities, which previously opposed their establishment, are now said to be helping to develop and link some of them to water, gas and electricity. Preparations were under way to incorporate other housing units into the master plans of existing settlements, a move which would substantially enlarge the territory of the settlements. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 March)

335. On 28 March, six Palestinians, including a 74-year-old man, a woman and two members of the PLO Executive Committee, were injured by IDF gunfire during a demonstration against the expansion of the Yitzhar settlement. The 74-year-old man was seriously injured in the face and lost consciousness. One man was injured in the head, another in the shoulder and another one in the jaw. The other casualties were also hit in the upper part of the body. The incident reportedly occurred when some 300 residents of the Asira el Qibliya (west of Nablus) set off for their land, where bulldozers were carrying out ground work for the expansion of the settlement. According to the residents, hundreds of their olive trees had been uprooted during the operation. Commenting on the incident, the IDF spokesman stated that "dozens of Palestinians staged a demonstration between the Yitzhar settlement and Asira el Qibliya. They were served with a military order stating that it was a closed military zone and were asked to disperse. When they refused, they were dispersed by IDF and border police who took the measures used to disperse demonstrations". (*Ha'aretz*, 29 March)

336. On 30 March, the Civil Administration Central Planning Office in the West Bank rejected Palestinian objections to the master plan for the expansion of the Maaleh Adumim settlement. The plan, which mainly covered area C and partly area B, would enlarge the municipal territory of the 20,000-strong settlement by some 12,000 dunums to

a total of some 60,000 dunums of land. By comparison, the territory of Tel Aviv, with its 350,000 residents, amounts to 51,000 dunums. Residents of five villages located east of Jerusalem and representatives of the Palestinian Authority claimed that the land at issue was the only remaining farmland belonging to the villages in the region. In his statement of rejection, the director of the Civil Administration's Planning Office, architect Shlomo Moskovitz, indicated that "the project concerned only State-owned land and that should any land ownership in the area covered by the plan be proved, this land would be excluded from the project". (*Ha'aretz*, 31 March)

337. On 4 April, an official report published by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Information indicated that 375 dunums of agricultural land had been seized by Israel in March throughout the Palestinian Territories. The report also stated that settlement expansion took place on hundreds of additional dunums of land. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 10 April)

338. On 6 April, an appeal filed by several human rights organizations in the High Court of Justice on behalf of 11 Palestinian families charged that Palestinian Jerusalemites who had gone abroad or lived in the occupied territories had had their permanent residency status annulled and their Israeli identity cards withdrawn by the Interior Ministry. The appeal stated that the new Interior Ministry policy was turning East Jerusalem residents who had gone abroad without the intention of settling there into illegal immigrants deprived of any rights in the city where they had been born and where they dwelt. The appeal stated, *inter alia*, that these residents were not allowed to stay in Israel and had to leave their homes in East Jerusalem for good. It further claimed that the policy was against the "open bridges" procedures which existed for 30 years, under which residents of East Jerusalem could reside abroad for a long period or move beyond the Green Line without the risk of losing their status as permanent residents with Israeli identity cards. According to the petitioners, the objective of Interior Minister Eli Suissa, who had adopted this policy for nationalistic reasons, was to expel Arab residents from Jerusalem. "This is an improper goal which is against a state of law and values of equality", the appeal claimed.

339. On 7 April, the Custodian of Absentee Properties sent eviction notices to 100 families in the Yatta area, in the Hebron district. The families were told to evacuate an area of 20,000 dunums of land although they possessed official deeds of ownership of the land. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 24 April)

340. On 8 April, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert declared that the fate of Har Homa was sealed and vowed to use all his political clout to make sure that the construction of the settlement would begin as soon as possible. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 April)

341. On 10 April, it was reported that Israel was planning to annex an additional 12,000 dunums of land in order to expand the Maaleh Adumim settlement on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem. The plan, known as E-1, aims to create a direct link between the settlement and Jerusalem via land on which a row of hotels is to be built. The settlement is to be expanded through the addition of 3,500 new housing units. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 10 April)

342. On 14 April, the heads of the Jordan Valley Local Council announced that the number of Jewish residents in the region had increased by 10 per cent and that agricultural land had been "expanded" in order to respond to the needs of the growing population there. "We see increased absorption and growth", stated David Levi, the Council head, indicating that since the beginning of 1997 some 60 new families had joined the 590 families living in the region's settlements. He denied charges reported on the "Voice of Israel" that several settlements in the Jordan Valley had confiscated adjacent land to allow for their expansion. According to Mr. Levi, all of the lands which had been "added" to the settlements were located within the Local Council's boundaries. According to "Peace Now" estimates, the Jewish population in the occupied territories had increased by 9 per cent in 1997. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 April)

343. On 19 April, IDF troops stopped Palestinians who tried to build on a site adjacent to the Morag settlement in Gush Katif. IDF officers warned the Palestinian police that the construction violated the Oslo Accords. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20 April)

344. On 28 April, it was reported that following an intervention by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and pressure by the "Givat Hazayit Association", the number of housing units in the Efrat settlement whose construction could start immediately had increased by almost fourfold, from 268 to 807. Of the 107 plots allocated for build-your-own-home projects, only five remained unsold. The head of the "Givat Hazayit Association" stated that his group had signed a deal with a contractor for the construction of 330 additional housing units. The construction of 90 of these units had begun, with 60 already completed. In a related development, the secretariat of the Nokdim settlement reported that preparations were under way for the construction of the Jerusalem bypass road via Har Homa. In yet another development, it was reported that the Housing

Ministry was continuing to work on a project envisaging the construction of thousands of housing units in the Greater Jerusalem area, including in the Adam settlement and in several areas under the jurisdiction of the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council. The project envisaged the establishment of new settlements and the linking of existing ones with a view to creating a territorial chain between Jerusalem proper and the Greater Jerusalem area. The project was said to be headed by a Labour Party member who was a consultant for settlement issues to the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 April)

345. On 8 May, it was reported that four additional settlements (Neveh Tsuf, Psagot, Mahmesh and Kokhav Hashahar) expressed their wish to absorb members of the Falasha Mora who remained in transit camps in Addis Ababa. They joined three other settlements (Ofra, Kdumim and Efrat) which had already signed an agreement with the Ministry of Immigrants Absorption to absorb some 150 families (50 families per settlement). In the first phase, the Ministry would allocate NIS 1 million to each of the settlements that would absorb immigrants. The money would serve to renovate and bring in new mobile homes, build conversion centres and employ five or six social workers in each settlement. Ofra was the only settlement to have absorbed new immigrants so far, with 23 families arriving over the past month. Other immigrants were expected to arrive at the other settlements in the coming weeks. (*Ha'aretz*, 8 May)

346. On 8 May, it was reported that the settler group Ateret Cohanim had set up two large tents on two dunums of land inside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. The move came in reaction to the killing of one of the group's members two days earlier. The settlers said that they would remove the tents only after being given permission to build a new settlement. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 8 May)

347. On 12 May, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised that by the next general elections there would be houses on Har Homa in East Jerusalem. (*Jerusalem Post*, 13 May)

348. On 15 May, it was reported that, in the wake of the fatal stabbing of an Israeli in the Old City of Jerusalem a week earlier, settlers had seized two more Arab-owned properties in the heart of an Islamic neighbourhood. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 15 May)

349. On 19 May, it was reported that approximately 70 per cent of construction for orthodox Jews in the next decade was planned in settlements in the West Bank. According to the Peace Now movement, some 29,000 housing units for orthodox Jews were slated for construction, including 14,000 in Modi'in Elit and Kiryat Hasefer; 5,700 in Beitar; 1,200 in Emanuel; 1,100 in Hashmona'im (Ganei Modi'in); and 6,624 in Matityahu. Peace Now Director-General, Mossi Raz, stated that the plans practically meant that orthodox Jews were left without many options except to live beyond the Green Line. (*Ha'aretz*, 19 May)

350. On 20 May, the Jerusalem Centre for Human Rights and three Palestinian villages in the Jerusalem area appealed to the High Court of Justice to revoke the plan to place more land under the jurisdiction of the Maaleh Adumim settlement. The petitioners claimed that the decision to apportion more than 12,000 dunums of land to Maaleh Adumim harmed the villages. They claimed that the annexation practically deprived the Abu Dis, Anata, Azarya, A-Tur and Isawiya villages of land reserves for their development. They also claimed that the annexed area included a major thoroughfare used by the residents of the territories who could not travel through Jerusalem owing to the entry ban to Israel. The annexation plan would also impose a de facto closure of Palestinian villages in the area because of the ban on Palestinian entry into Jewish settlement areas. Finally, the petitioners claimed that the expansion of Maaleh Adumim was not meant to meet its residents' needs but was part of the metropolitan Jerusalem plan which was against international conventions concerning occupied territory. (*Ha'aretz*, 21 May)

351. On 21 May, it was reported that the Ministry Committee of Directors-General for Jerusalem Affairs was expected to submit to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu an emergency plan to strengthen Jerusalem's Jewish population in the light of predictions that the city's Arab population in the year 2020 would exceed 40 per cent, an increase from the current 30 per cent. The plan envisaged, *inter alia*, the expansion of the city's borders by unifying its suburbs into a single administrative unit which would also include settlements beyond the Green Line such as Maaleh Adumim, Givat Zeev and Beitar. The plan would help Jerusalem's housing shortage by building 100,000 additional housing units in the annexed areas, including in areas located beyond the Green Line. The measure was meant to ensure the current demographic ratio in 2010. It also called for the construction of several roads, including Road 1 which would link the French Hill to the Neve Ya'acov settlement; the Mount Scopus road which would link the Maaleh Adumim settlement to Road 1; and the East Jerusalem beltway which would complete the existing beltway encircling Jerusalem to the east, north and south. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 21 May)

352. On 28 May, the Jerusalem Municipality demolished the shacks set up by the Ateret Cohanim group at Burj Al

Laqlaq in the Old City because the group had no permit to build. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 June)

F. Information concerning the occupied Syrian Arab Golan

353. On 19 January, it was reported that despite a relatively high unemployment rate, demand for housing in the Katzrin settlement was "enormous". Thirty-five plots are said to have been allocated to some 120 families. Half of the 100 housing units in the settlement's new neighbourhood are said to be under construction, with residents awaiting the opening of a $10 million factory which would provide some 80 new jobs, in addition to a NIS 30 million college campus, which would create 120 new jobs. The Golan Development Company is said to have invested NIS 5 million over the past year in infrastructure work on 250 dunums of land designated for industry. Finally, within the framework of a regional employment project, the Katzrin Council and the Golan Local Council gave a NIS 1,500 bonus to every manpower company which could find a job for an unemployed person in the area. (*Ha'aretz*, 19 January)

354. On 27 January, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu specified once again that he would not agree to withdraw from the Golan Heights, even in exchange for a peace treaty with the Syrian Arab Republic. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 January)

355. On 10 February, hundreds of Golan Heights Druse demonstrated in Majdal Shams in support of Iraq and President Saddam Hussein. The demonstrators paraded through the village and were followed by a rally in the main square where they chanted slogans praising Saddam Hussein and Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad. They also chanted slogans encouraging Saddam to attack Tel Aviv. A large police force was deployed in the area but did not enter the village in order to avoid provocation. The demonstrations were accompanied by a general strike in Majdal Shams, Masada, Bukata and Ein Kinieh. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 11 February)

356. On 14 February, hundreds of Druse took part in agitated demonstrations in the Golan Heights to mark the sixteenth anniversary of their general strike against the Israeli Government's decision to extend Israeli law to the region. Residents of the Druse villages of Majdal Shams, Masada, Bukata and Ein Kinieh refused to accept Israeli identity cards and staged a strike that lasted over six weeks. The villagers marked the anniversary of what they describe as their uprising at the beginning of the general strike on the same day every year. Parades and rallies were held in Masada, Bukata and Majdal Shams, with masked demonstrators holding Syrian flags and pictures of the Syrian President, Hafez Al-Assad and chanting slogans against Israel. A large police force was deployed in the region and in the villages to prevent disturbances. The police did not intervene and the protesters dispersed quietly, except in Majdal Shams where four Israeli policemen and a newspaper photographer were injured by stones thrown at the end of the demonstrations. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 15 February)

357. On 23 March, the Knesset Law Committee discussed a proposed amendment to the Golan Heights Law which would require a two-thirds majority to alter the Law. The amendment had already passed its preliminary reading, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and several ministers voting in favour. Law Committee Chairman Hanan Porat indicated that he had decided to put the amendment on the day's agenda ahead of other proposed legislation because of the importance of the issue. (*Jerusalem Post*, 23 March)

358. On 8 April, it was reported that the Government intended to lodge a complaint with the United Nations Disengagement Observation Force about ditches being dug along the Syrian side of the Golan Heights ceasefire line on the grounds that they constituted a breach of the ceasefire agreement. The Syrians reportedly replied that the ditches were for agricultural use, an explanation rejected by IDF. Minor violations of the 1974 disengagement agreement are reportedly common in the Golan. They usually involve increases in the number of soldiers deployed there. Under the agreement, each side can request a spot-check by the United Nations forces, although this has seldom been done. The last time such a count was made was in 1997, at the request of the Syrian Arab Republic, amid fears of a possible surprise attack by Israel. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 8 April)

359. On 11 April, Israel's former Ambassador to the United States of America, Itamar Rabinovich, stated that the previous Labour Government had never made a commitment to withdraw from the Golan Heights, thereby dismissing the reported claim by Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass that Syria had received a letter from United States President Bill Clinton to that effect. Mr. Rabinovich, a Tel Aviv University professor and a specialist in Syrian history and politics who once headed the negotiating team with the Syrian Arab Republic, accused the Syrian Defence Minister of making "outrageous statements". (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 April)

360. On 17 April, some 650 policemen, border policemen and soldiers under the command of OC Northern District were deployed in Druse villages in the Golan Heights as the villages marked the Independence Day of the Syrian Arab

Republic. Villagers from Bukata, Masada and Majdal Shams waved Syrian flags and pictures of Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad and shouted slogans against the Israeli occupation and for the return of the Golan to Syrian sovereignty. In Majdal Shams, some 300 residents staged a march from the village square to the "Shouting Hill". Hundreds of Druse, including the Governor of Damascus, gathered on the Syrian side of the border. The Syrian national anthem was played and speeches calling for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights were made on both sides of the border. Words of encouragement for the residents under Israeli occupation and congratulations for Syrian Independence Day were shouted from the Syrian side while residents on the occupied side threw across the border four flags painted with the colours of the Syrian flag. After the rally, the residents returned to the village square where they staged another rally. Some 600 residents took part in a third rally in Masada village. The march took place quietly. The Israeli police expressed their satisfaction at the relative calm during the celebrations. (*Ha'aretz*, 19 April)

361. On 21 April, sit-ins in front of the Red Cross offices were held simultaneously in Damascus and Majdal Shams on Arab Prisoners Day. The protesters in Damascus gave a petition to representatives of the Red Cross calling upon the international organization to work for the release of prisoners held in Israeli detention centres. In the Golan, the two hour sit-in was staged by residents of Majdal Shams and a delegation of Palestinian prisoners from the West Bank. The organizers of the sit-in reported that there were as many as 18 sentenced prisoners from the Golan in Israeli prisons. A number of youths had also been arrested in recent weeks and their interrogation was still under way. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 April)

362. On 25 May, a housing campaign opened on the Golan Heights, with 380 homes going on sale in 14 settlements there. The new homes were being offered at what appeared to be bargain prices compared to other parts of the country. A 60 to 70 square metre ground floor house on a plot of land covering half a dunum cost between $47,000 and $49,000. Around 200 such homes were part of the campaign. They could all be expanded to up to 220 square metres. In four settlements, buyers would be able to choose from another 180 homes, ranging in size from 110 square metres to 170 square metres and priced up to $110,000. Financial assistance was available in the form of loans and grants covering up to 75 per cent of the price. As part of the campaign, the Council had also invested some NIS 4 million in infrastructure development. A similar sum had been allocated by the Government. Golan Regional Council Chairman Yehuda Wolman stated that the housing programme was part of the ongoing development of the region. He explained that the subsidies were aimed at changing the demographic balance in the region, where more than 15,000 Israelis and 18,000 Druse lived, and to double the Golan settler population in the next two years. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 25 May)

363. On 27 May, the United Nations Security Council decided unanimously to keep United Nations military observers on the Golan Heights for an additional six months and warned that tensions could erupt there at any time until Middle East parties forged a comprehensive peace. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 May)